UNIVERSITY OF
CHARLESTON LIBRARY
1700018853

MORRIS HARVEY COLLEGE
CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

ANDREW S. THOMAS
MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Call Number
227
St4m

Accession
13453

Date Due

NOV 3 - 1947

NOV 17 1947

FEB 1 0 '57

APR 25 '64

LIBRARY

LIBRARY D.C.

AUG 13 '73

The Messages of the Bible

EDITED BY

FRANK K. SANDERS, Ph.D., President of Washburn College, Topeka, Kansas, and Professor CHARLES F. KENT, Ph.D., of Yale University

A new series, in which emphasis is placed upon the concise, forcible, and realistic interpretation of the Bible. The books of the Bible are grouped according to a natural classification, their contents arranged in the order of appearance, and a scholarly yet popular paraphrase of their distinctive thought given in plain and expressive English. The purpose of this series is to enable any reader of the Bible to understand its meaning as a reverent scholar of to-day does, and in particular to receive the exact impression which the words as originally heard or read must have made upon those for whom they were delivered.

This series is not a substitute for the Bible, but an aid to the reverent, appreciative, and enthusiastic reading of the Scriptures; in fact, it will serve the purpose of an

ORIGINAL AND POPULAR COMMENTARY

Technicalities and unsettled questions will be, as far as possible, ignored. Each volume will be prepared by a leading specialist, and will contain such brief introductions as serve to put the reader into intelligent relation to the general theme treated. The editorial rearrangement of the order of the Biblical books or sections will represent the definite results of sober scholarship.

I. The Messages of the Earlier Prophets.
II. The Messages of the Later Prophets.
III. The Messages of the Law Givers.
IV. The Messages of the Prophetical and Priestly Historians.
V. The Messages of the Psalmists.
VI. The Messages of the Sages.
VII. The Messages of the Poets.
VIII. The Messages of the Apocalyptic Writers.
IX. The Messages of Jesus according to the Synoptists
X. The Messages of Jesus according to John.
XI. The Messages of Paul.
XII. The Messages of the Apostles.

The Messages of the Bible

EDITED BY

PROFESSOR FRANK K. SANDERS, PH.D.
of Washburn College
AND
PROFESSOR CHARLES F. KENT, PH.D.
of Yale University

VOLUME XI

THE MESSAGES OF PAUL

The Messages of the Bible

THE MESSAGES OF PAUL

ARRANGED IN HISTORICAL ORDER. ANALYZED, AND FREELY RENDERED IN PARAPHRASE, WITH INTRODUCTIONS

BY

GEORGE BARKER STEVENS, PH.D., D.D.
Dwight Professor of Systematic Theology in Yale University

WAKE FOREST COLLEGE LIBRARY
Do not remove the card from this Pocket.

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1921

13453

Copyright, 1900,
BY CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

227
S71m

PREFACE

This volume comprises a paraphrase of the first ten epistles of Paul, arranged in their probable chronological order, with brief introductions and analyses. The body of the text is reproduced, with some revision, from my "Epistles of Paul in Modern English," published in 1898. It is believed that the explanations which are here given of the time, place, and occasion of each letter, and the indications respecting the contents and movement of thought in each, will materially increase the convenience and usefulness of the work.

In a second volume will be comprised the other eleven epistles of the New Testament, in a similar arrangement, and with similar explanations.

GEORGE BARKER STEVENS.

YALE UNIVERSITY, *January*, 1900.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

PAGE

I. Epistles in the Early Christian Church . . . 3

II. Peculiarities of the Pauline Epistles 8

III. Paul's Life and Character as Reflected in his Epistles 15

IV. The Problems of the Early Church as Reflected in Paul's Epistles 18

V. The Missionary Addresses of Paul 20

VI Paul's Addresses in Defence of Himself . . . 27

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

I. The Church at Thessalonica and the Occasion of Paul's Writing to it 37

II. The Doctrinal and Practical Contents of the Epistle 39

III. The Date of the Epistle 40

IV. The First Message to the Thessalonians.

1. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1) 41

2. Paul's Reminiscences and Defence of Himself (2 : 1-12) 42

3. The Thessalonians' Reception of his Message (2 : 13-16) 43

4. Paul's Desire to Revisit the Thessalonians (2 : 17-20) 43

PAGE

5. The Sending of Timothy and His Report (3 : 1-10) . 44
6. The Apostle's two great Desires (3 : 11-13) . . 44
7. A Rebuke of Certain Sins (4 : 1-8) 45
8. An Exhortation to Brotherly Love (4 : 9-12) . . . 45
9. Comfort in View of the Lord's Coming (4 : 13-18) . 46
10. Various Exhortations and Warnings (5) 46

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

I. A Later Chapter in the History of the Thessalonian Church 51

II. The Application of the Idea of the Second Coming in the Thessalonian Church 53

III. The Second Message to the Thessalonians.
1. Salutation, Thanksgiving, and Commendation (1) . 54
2. Instruction Regarding Christ's Advent (2 : 1-12) . . 55
3. Exhortations and Warnings (2 : 13 to 3 : 18) . . . 56

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

I. The Great Doctrinal Letters 61

II. The Galatian Churches 62

III. The Judaizing Crusade 64

IV. The Aim and Date of the Epistle 65

V. The Message to the Galatians.
1. The Salutation (1 : 1-5) 67
2. The Truthfulness of Paul's Teaching (1 : 6-10) . . 67
3. The Divine Origin of his Gospel (1 : 11-17) . . . 68
4. Paul's Activity after his Conversion (1 : 18-24) . . 69
5. The Approval of Paul's Gospel by the Primitive Apostles (2 : 1-10) 69

Contents

PAGE

6. Peter's Action at Antioch (2 : 11-21) 70
7. The Antagonism between the Judaizing Doctrine and the Gospel (3 : 1-14) 73
8. The True Relation between the Gospel and the Law (3 : 15-22) 74
9. The Preparatory Office of the Law (3 : 23-29) . . . 75
10. Man's Position under the Law and under the Gospel (4 : 1-7) 76
11. The Inferiority of the Law (4 : 8-11) 77
12. The Galatians' Present Disregard of Paul Undeserved and Unwise (4 : 12-20) 77
13. An Allegorical Argument (4 : 21 to 5 : 1) 79
14. No Justification by Ceremonial Acts (5 : 2-12) . . 80
15. The Right Use of Christian Freedom (5 : 13-15) . . 81
16. The Spiritual and the Natural Life Contrasted (5 : 16-26) 82
17. The Christian Law of Love (6 : 1-5) 83
18. The Law of the Spiritual Harvest (6 : 6-10) . . . 84
19. The True Ground for Glorying (6 : 11-18) 84

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

I. The City and Church of Corinth 89

II. The Parties in the Corinthian Church . . . 91

III. The Occasion, Aim, and Characteristics of the Epistle 93

IV. The First Message to the Corinthians.

1. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1 : 1-9) 95
2. The Factions within the Church (1 : 10 to 4 : 21) . . 95
3. The Case of the Fornicator (5) 103
4. Going to Law Before Heathen Courts (6 : 1-11) . . 105
5. The Limits of Christian Liberty (6 : 12-20) 106
6. The Question of Marriage (7) 107

PAGE

7. The Proper Attitude toward Sacrificial Meat (8) . 111
8. Paul's Own Example of Self-Denial (9) 112
9. Christian Freedom Not to be Abused (10 : 1 to 11 : 1) 115
10. Proper Conduct in the Church Assemblies (11 : 2-34) 119
11. The Right Use of Spiritual Gifts (12 : 1 to 14 : 40) . 122
12. The Proofs and Meaning of the Resurrection (15) . 128
13. The Collection for the Jerusalem Church and Personal References (16) 133

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

I. How the Epistle Came to be Written 137

II. The Character and Value of the Epistle . . 138

III. The Relation of this Epistle to First Corinthians 139

IV. The Second Message to the Corinthians.

1. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1 : 1-11) 141
2. Paul's Confidence in the Church (1 : 12 to 2 : 11) . 141
3. The Apostle's Efforts on Behalf of the Church (2 : 12 to 5 : 10) 144
4. The Motives of Paul's Labor (5 : 11 to 6 : 13) . . . 150
5. The Question of Intercourse with Heathen (6 : 14 to 7 : 1) 152
6. The Mission of Titus (7 : 2-16) 153
7. The Collection for the Judean Churches (8, 9) . . 155
8. Paul's Defence of his Apostolic Authority (10 to 12) 159
9. Concluding Instructions and Salutations (13) . . . 166

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

I. The Origin and Character of the Roman Church 171

II. The Motive of the Epistle 173

Contents

PAGE

III. THE COURSE OF THOUGHT IN THE EPISTLE . . . 174

IV. THE MESSAGE TO THE ROMANS.

1. Introduction and Theme (1 : 1-17) 175
2. Mankind Tends not to Righteousness, but to Evil (1 : 18-32) 177
3. The Jews Cannot be Saved by Good Works (2 : 1 to 3 : 20) 178
4. The True Way of Salvation—that of Faith (3 : 21-31) 182
5. The Old Testament Proof of Justification by Faith (4) 184
6. Praise of God's Saving Grace (5) 186
7. The Refutation of Objections and False Inferences (6, 7) 189–194
   (1) This Doctrine of Salvation gives no Warrant to Moral License (6 : 1-14)
   (2) Freedom from the Law not Freedom to Break it (6 : 15 to 7 : 6)
   (3) The Law merely a useful Instrumentality (7 : 7-25)
8. The Blessedness of being Justified (8) 194
9. God's Providential Dealing with the Jewish Nation (9 : 1-29) 197
10. The Jews' Responsibility for their Rejection (9 : 30 to 10 : 21) 199
11. The Restoration of the Nation (11) 201
12. The Life of Consecration to God's Service (12) . . 203
13. The Public Relations of the Christian (13) 204
14. The Treatment of Conscientious Scruples (14 : 1 to 15 : 13) 205
15. The Apostle's Inspiring Mission (15 : 14-33) . . . 207

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EPISTLES OF THE IMPRISONMENT 211

PAGE

II. THE ERRORS COMBATED IN COLOSSIANS 213

III. THE MESSAGE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

1. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1 : 1-8) 214
2. The Pre-eminence of Christ (1 : 9-29) 215
3. The Apostle's Efforts on Behalf of his Readers (1 : 24—2 : 7) 216
4. A Warning Against Current Errors (2 : 8-23) . . . 218
5. The Christian Standards of Duty (3 : 1 to 4 : 6) . . 219
6. Personal References (4 : 7-18) 222

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

I. THE OCCASION OF THE LETTER 227

II. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE LETTER 227

III. THE MESSAGE TO PHILEMON.

1. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1-7) 228
2. The Appeal for Onesimus (8-22) 229
3. Farewell Greetings (23-25) 230

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

I. THE CHURCHES OF ASIA 233

II. WAS EPHESIANS A CIRCULAR LETTER? 234

III. THE THEME AND DATE OF THE EPISTLE 235

IV. THE MESSAGE TO THE EPHESIANS.

1. Salutation and Praise to God for the Blessings of Salvation (1 : 1-14) 236
2. The Saving, Reconciling Work of Christ (1 : 15 to 3 : 21) 237
3. The Unity of Believers (4 : 1-16) 241

PAGE

4. Demands of Christian Life and Duty (4 : 17 to 6 : 20) 243
5. Farewell and Benediction (6 : 21-24) 248

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

I. Paul's Relations with Philippi 251
II. The Occasion and Object of the Epistle . . . 252
III. The Message to the Philippians.
1. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1 : 1-11) 253
2. A Chapter in the Apostle's Experience (1 : 12-30) . 254
3. Exhortation to Unity and Self-denial (2 : 1-18) . . 256
4. The Missions of Timothy and Epaphroditus (2 : 19-30) 258
5. Warnings Against Judaism and Libertinism (3 : 1 to 4 : 1) 259
6. Concluding Exhortations and Greetings (4 : 2-23) . 261

Appendix 265

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

I

EPISTLES IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Some of the most important literature of antiquity exists in the form of letters. The correspondence of men prominent in political and literary life often throws a clear light upon the conditions of the age and reveals the forces, civic, social, and religious, which were operative in the time to which the letters belong. A familiar example is the correspondence between the younger Pliny and the emperor Trajan in the early years of the second Christian century. Pliny was governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor, and, in the discharge of that office, sent letters and reports to his master, to some of which we possess the emperor's replies. One of these letters of Pliny describes the beliefs and practices of the Christians in his province and asks for instruction as to the best way of dealing with them. The letter opens to our view the situation, struggles, sufferings, and successes of the early church. It shows how the ranks of believers were increasing by additions from all classes of society; how the strange "superstition," as

Pliny thought it, was spreading like a contagion in city and country; how the heathen shrines were almost deserted and the practice of sacrifice in danger of being abandoned. It reflects the piety, devotion, and blameless life of the Christians of the period, describing how they were accustomed to meet at night and to sing hymns of praise to Christ. It enables us to see them assembled at their common meal, the "love-feast," at the close of which they solemnly celebrated the Holy Supper instituted by Christ. It depicts their orderliness and sobriety, and describes the solemn promises by which they bound themselves to abstain from all impurity and crime, and to live a holy life.

The letters which have been preserved to us in the New Testament are not less interesting than this letter of Pliny for the historical information which they convey. Sometimes this information is more personal and biographical; sometimes more general, including matters of public and common interest and importance. A letter may have its main significance in revealing the mind and feeling of the writer, or its chief interest may lie in its portrayal of a historical situation, a form of belief, or a type of doctrine. In the New Testament epistles all these elements of interest are blended together, though in very different proportions. We have one example of a private letter, that of Paul to Philemon. Some of our New Testament epistles, like those of Paul to the Galatians and Colossians, and the

Epistles of Jude and Second Peter, are largely taken up with describing current forms of error which the readers are warned to avoid. Some, like the Epistles to the Corinthians, deal mainly with perplexing practical questions of conduct. Still others, like Romans and Hebrews, are chiefly devoted to the exposition and defence of Christian doctrine. But these differences are differences of proportion. Every epistle is a reflex of its age and its author. Each of them has a message which reflects its own time, purpose, and circumstances.

It is impossible to determine with certainty the exact order of the epistles of the New Testament. In the opinion of many scholars the Epistle of James is the earliest. In any case, the first ten epistles of Paul, included in this volume, are among the earlier of the New Testament epistles, since they probably belong within the period A.D. 52–63. If the Epistle of James was written before 52 A.D. it is, in all probability, the only example which has been preserved to us of a pre-Pauline letter. It is possible, however, that Paul himself may have written letters to churches before he wrote the earliest of his epistles which have been preserved to us—those to the Thessalonians. In 2 Thess. 3 : 17 he speaks of his habit of adding a salutation in his own handwriting as a token of genuineness "in every epistle"—an expression which naturally suggests that he had already written a number of epistles. In the same letter (2 Thess. 2 : 2) he refers to a spurious

epistle which was in circulation, purporting to come from him and his assistants. Such a forgery would be more natural if several genuine letters of Paul were already known to have been written. From other sources we know that some of Paul's epistles have been lost. In 1 Cor. 5:9 he speaks of what he had written in an earlier epistle to the Corinthians, to which they had replied (7:1). In Col. 4:16 he directs that the epistle which he is writing be read to the church at Laodicea and that the epistle to the Laodicean church be read to the Colossians. Unfortunately this epistle to the Laodiceans has also been lost.

Next to personal, oral teachings, the epistle was the best means of instruction available in the early church. The Christian congregations were widely scattered over Palestine and adjacent regions, and throughout the vast range of territory from Jerusalem to Rome. It is possible also that, as vague traditions testify, there were churches in the far East which lived without a history, and perished without leaving a memorial.

It was quite impracticable for the apostles to visit these widely scattered congregations frequently. The writing of letters partially supplied the place of such visits. In letters the special needs of a particular church or of a group of churches could receive attention. Hence we find that each New Testament epistle has well-defined characteristics which adapted it to its special purpose. Some

teach practical duties, others expose current errors. Some are chiefly doctrinal, others mainly practical. They warn the readers against erroneous or dangerous practices, encourage them in enduring persecution, picture the perils of apostasy, and fortify their faith by depicting the Christian's hope for the future. Thus it appears that the epistles were most natural, vital, and effective means of Christian teaching in the apostolic age.

In order to its right understanding, every epistle must be studied in the light of its time, purpose, and circumstances. Something must be known of the readers, their situation, faults, dangers, and progress in the Christian life; something, if possible, of the writer, his personality, experience, present condition, and relation to the readers. The epistles were, in a sense, projections of the personalities of their writers. They reflect definite and concrete conditions. In proportion as we apprehend these conditions these writings become vivid and realistic. They live and breathe again; they become a pleading and warning voice, now tender and persuasive, now stern and threatening, proclaiming to the struggling and often misguided believers of the first age the way of safety and peace.

Such being the occasion and purpose of the New Testament epistles, it would be very unnatural to expect in them a finished literary character or a strict logical structure. In the main, they are written in clear and expressive language, and in many passages they rise to heights of

real eloquence. The Epistle to the Hebrews, especially, is marked by a high degree of rhetorical power and finish. From a merely literary standpoint, however, the epistles of the New Testament are not classic productions, for they were not the work of cultured writers. The primitive apostles were plain, though by no means illiterate, men. They gave heed not so much to the form as to the practical effectiveness of their teaching. Through their rugged forms of expression they conveyed messages of truth and wisdom which are valid and essential for all times. These are among the original documents of our religion, emanating from those who constituted the inner circle of our Lord's followers, and, as such, have a unique and imperishable value for all believers.

II

PECULIARITIES OF THE PAULINE EPISTLES

The epistles of Paul were written to particular persons, churches, or groups of churches, and deal with the special circumstances and needs of their readers. Four of Paul's letters which have come down to us were addressed to individuals, namely, that to Philemon, that to Titus, and the two to Timothy. Of these the letter to Philemon is the only strictly private letter, those to Timothy and Titus, Paul's trusted helpers, having more of an official charac-

ter. All the other epistles, with one or possibly two exceptions, were addressed to local churches. Galatians was addressed to a group of churches, and, in the opinion of many, Ephesians was a circular letter designed for the churches of the region of which Ephesus was the chief city. Two of Paul's letters—Romans and Colossians—were written to churches which the apostle did not found and had never visited. Seven of them (1 and 2 Thess., Gal., 1 and 2 Cor., Eph., and Phil.) were addressed to churches where he was well known, and for whose instruction and progress in the Christian life he had personally labored.

The Pauline Epistles fall into four well-defined groups. This grouping represents not only their probable chronological order, but, to some extent, their differences of aim and subject-matter as well. It is as follows:

1. *The Earlier (or Missionary) Epistles* (A.D. 52–53).
   1 and 2 Thessalonians.
2. *The Great Doctrinal Epistles* (A.D. 55–58).
   Galatians.
   1 and 2 Corinthians.
   Romans.
3. *The Epistles of the Imprisonment* (A.D. 62–63).
   Colossians.
   Philemon.
   Ephesians.
   Philippians.

4. *The Pastoral Epistles* (A.D. 67–68).
   1 Timothy.
   Titus.
   2 Timothy.

The epistles of the first group are short, simple, and practical. They may be regarded as illustrating Paul's earlier missionary instruction to his converts—hence the name "Missionary Epistles," sometimes applied to them. They treat of but one doctrinal subject—the second coming of Christ.

The second group is the great repertory of Paul's doctrinal and ethical teaching. Galatians and Romans deal chiefly with his doctrine of justification by faith. They are designed to disprove the current Jewish teaching (which was invading the churches) that men might be saved by obedience to the Mosaic law. On the contrary, Paul maintained that the sole basis of salvation is the grace of God, to be appropriated by faith on man's part. The Jewish doctrine represents man as achieving his salvation by meritorious deeds. Thus the great dogmatic watchwords of the two systems are, on the Jewish side, debt and works, and on Paul's side, grace and faith.

The third group of letters is predominantly Christological. Errors had invaded the churches addressed, which tended to degrade the person and work of Christ, and the apostle writes with a view to showing his pre-eminence and saving power, so that the readers may be induced to keep

their allegiance to Christ and his gospel. The errors which were current in Galatia and Rome undermined the necessity and significance of faith; those at Colossæ and Ephesus degraded the object of faith and so destroyed its meaning and power.

The Pastoral Epistles were designed to instruct Timothy and Titus in their duties as superintendents of the churches in Ephesus and Crete, and were thus semi-official in character. But they have also a strong personal element and a tone of warm sympathy and affection.[1]

Paul's epistles represent a wide variety of theme and purpose. They are equally different in style and tone. Some are simple and plain, others obscure and difficult. Some are persuasive and gentle, others vehement and severe. More commonly these elements are blended, in varying proportions, in the same letter. In 1 and 2 Corinthians, especially, affectionate assurances and appeals are mingled with passionate warnings and denunciations. Galatians and Romans are chiefly argumentative and polemic, Philippians is the most affectionate and commendatory of all Paul's epistles. This variety in the apostle's writings, due to the differing times, circumstances, and purposes of his various letters, enables us to view the apostle and his work on many sides and in many lights. It gives us a distinct advantage in the apprehension of his

[1] For more detailed information regarding the various epistles see the special introductions which are prefixed to them.

teaching and in the appreciation of his great personality. He becomes a living figure—a toiling, suffering, rejoicing, triumphing man. No biblical character, except Jesus Christ, is so clearly portrayed in Scripture as is the apostle Paul.

This vital quality is one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the Pauline epistles. They are the work of an eager and intense mind which was absolutely absorbed in the cause of Christ. Every epistle is a transcript of some quality of the man. Whether the apostle commends the commonest virtues and duties, or warns his readers against false doctrine and practice, or expounds and defends his gospel of gracious salvation, or portrays the glories of the heavenly life which awaits the Christian, we note the same energy of feeling and depth of conviction.

The charm and power of Paul's letters lie in this earnestness and sincerity, rather than in their literary character. Paul set no great value on the rhetorician's art. In his preaching and writing he was quite indifferent to "excellency of speech or of wisdom" (1 Cor. 2 : 1). The methods of "the wise," "the scribe" and "the disputer of this world" (1 Cor. 1 : 20) did not seem to him adapted to the proclamation of the plain and simple message of the gospel. He confessed that he was "rude in speech," that is, plain and unpolished in style; but he justly resented the idea that he was wanting in "knowl-

edge" (2 Cor. 11 : 6), that is, in a clear grasp of the truths of Christianity, and even his enemies, desirous as they were to disparage him, were compelled to admit that his letters were "weighty and strong" (2 Cor. 10 : 10).

The principal literary peculiarities of Paul's letters are: (1) Carelessness of outer form. This characteristic is partly due to the impetuous rush of his thoughts and to his complete concentration of them upon the subject in hand. (2) His habit of digression. He frequently abandons for a time the main line of his argument and takes up some incidental feature of it, or some point suggested to his mind by some word or phrase which he had just been using. This peculiarity illustrates the richness and variety of his thought, which may be compared to a swollen stream which now and again overflows its banks. (3) The use of such rhetorical forms and devices as anacoluthon, paronomasia, and allegory. Although Paul disclaimed being a rhetorician, he employed, like every forceful and vigorous writer, such rhetorical arts as were natural for his mind and suited to his purpose. If his letters are not marked by what we call fine writing, they are characterized by vigorous thought and by forcible, and sometimes eloquent, expression. But Paul's eloquence is never the stilted and conventional eloquence of the professional sophist, but is the eloquence of elevated thought, fitly expressed, which moves the heart by its own inherent impressiveness and power. (4) The frequent occurrence of

complex figures, and long and involved sentences, or, on the other hand, of gaps in the argument which require to be filled up in order clearly to apprehend the meaning.[1] These peculiarities often make it difficult to follow the apostle's thought and render some form of explanation, by means of analysis, commentary, or paraphrase, almost indispensable to the reader of the English translation.

The apostle is by no means an easy writer to understand, but the difficulties are not insuperable. He possessed clear and definite ideas; the difficulty presented by his style and modes of thought and argument need not, if we will use available aid, prevent us from obtaining a definite understanding of them.

Without some appreciation of the literary peculiarities and historical circumstances of Paul's letters it is impossible to understand them accurately. If we read them as if they had been written in our own time by a man who possessed the education, modes of thought, and methods of argument which are common in our age, we shall miss much of their true force and flavor. They are ancient writings and they reflect a world of long ago. Their essential substance of truth is, indeed, changeless; but the vessel which holds the treasure is of antique mould and, like all things ancient, must be seen and appreciated

[1] I have more fully illustrated the literary peculiarities of Paul's epistles in an essay entitled, "The Epistles of Paul as Literature," in the volume: "The Bible as Literature." T. Y. Crowell & Co., Boston, 1896.

in the light of its time. Moreover, the Pauline writings may be likened to a vessel which is of an individual pattern, having peculiarities all its own. These, too, must be, in some measure, seen and felt before we can perceive the fitness of this vessel to enshrine the jewel of divine truth.

III

PAUL'S LIFE AND CHARACTER AS REFLECTED IN HIS EPISTLES

The epistles of Paul furnish a most valuable supplement to the narrative of his life as found in the Book of Acts. His language often reflects the time when he was "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (1 Tim. 1 : 13), and we see him carrying the same fiery zeal—tempered into a calm, steady flame of Christian love—into his missionary labors. He pictures himself as a Pharisee, striving to obtain a righteousness of his own by deeds of legal obedience (Phil. 3 : 9). In Rom. 7 : 7–25 we have a leaf from his pre-Christian experience which shows how the conflict between sin and conscience raged within him until he found peace through faith in Christ. Like Luther, he had tried the path of pious works and ritualistic practices and had found that it led him only to despair. He could never be sure that he had fully done

the divine will. He was haunted by the fear that the balance was against him. His conclusion was that the effort to achieve salvation by his own meritorious deeds was hopeless, and this conclusion drove him to Christ to accept a salvation freely offered on the simple condition of faith. This experience was the foundation of Paul's whole philosophy regarding the purpose and use of the law. It was, he says, a tutor unto Christ (Gal. 3 : 24). Its aim was to " humble the proud to desire Christ's aid " (Luther).

The epistles also throw important light upon the experience by which Paul became a Christian. They show how marked and sudden was the transformation. He persisted in " making havoc " of the church up to the very moment of the change. On the day of his great experience he was riding at the head of a military troop toward Damascus with the intention of seizing and imprisoning any Christians whom he might find there. But, though he knew it not, his doubts about his own acceptableness to God and his conscious failure to fulfil the law had been preparing him to welcome a gracious salvation. He needed but to see that Christ was the true Messiah and Saviour to accept him with all his heart and soul. This disclosure was made to him on that memorable day when God graciously revealed his Son in him (Gal. 1 : 16). Spiritual changes commonly come suddenly in such natures as Paul's. The course of divine providence and the

processes of the Spirit which had been secretly and mysteriously leading up to it cannot be traced in detail, but when the change came it was radical and thorough. Saul the persecutor was a new creature in Christ and a germinal apostle of Christianity to the nations. A new world opened before him and a new love made him count all things as worthless in comparison with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ (Phil. 3 : 8).

Throughout his life Paul was true to the heavenly vision of Christ's supreme glory which flashed upon his heart that day on the way to Damascus. There never lived a more consistent and thorough-going Christian. Much as we admire Paul the missionary and Paul the teacher, we must admire even more Paul the sincere, earnest, consecrated Christian man. If he had not been such a man as he was, he could never have done the work which he achieved as a Christian apostle and theologian.

But the strength and robustness of Paul's character are not more clearly reflected in his epistles than his tenderness. He wept as he wrote his letters of encouragement and warning to his beloved converts (Phil. 3 : 18). His friendships were very close and affectionate. How overflowing with love is his language to Philemon, Timothy, and Titus, and even to the most faulty and erring of the congregations under his charge. A distinguished French preacher, Adolphe Monod, in a published sermon on *The Tears of St. Paul* says, toward the close: "The tears of

the apostle have explained him to us. The power of his apostleship was in his personal Christianity, and his Christianity was a Christianity of tears. By tears of grief he subdued others by gaining their sympathy; by tears of love he gained their love; and by tears of tenderness he persuaded others by the simplicity of his gospel."

IV

THE PROBLEMS OF THE EARLY CHURCH AS REFLECTED IN PAUL'S EPISTLES

It may aid us in making these epistles of Paul seem like real and living messages to recall, in general, some of the peculiar conditions and problems which called them forth. Paul's world was divided between two classes of men, Jews and heathen. Christianity took its rise in Judaism; but the people whose prophets had heralded the Messiah for the most part refused to recognize in Jesus the realization of their hopes. The first Christians were Jews, but they were a small and despised minority. As Christianity spread it encountered opposition from Jews and heathen alike. From both sides arose peculiar problems and conflicts. It was difficult to prevent Christians from compromising their faith and profession by concessions in doctrine and practice to Jewish and heathen ideas and

customs. Three illustrations of these difficulties may be cited:

(1) It was the current Jewish belief that unless men were circumcised after the custom of Moses they could not be saved (Acts 15 : 1). The Jewish Christians had been brought up in this belief, and were in constant danger of lapsing back into it. This return to Jewish belief and practice Paul called "falling from grace" (Gal. 5 : 4), or "Judaizing" (Gal. 2 : 14). It was the special aim of his epistles to the Galatians and the Romans to show the inconsistency of this idea with the doctrine of a free and full salvation bestowed upon the sole condition of faith, and to prevent his readers from yielding to the demands of the Judaizers.

(2) The Greeks before their conversion were accustomed to participate in idolatrous sacrificial feasts. Their views regarding the relations of the sexes were also notoriously lax. It was natural that after their conversion they should continue to cherish views on these subjects which were contrary to the demands of the Christian life. It was one of the principal objects of the Corinthian letters to correct faults of this character.

(3) In some parts of Asia Minor religious beliefs and observances had developed which were products of a union of Jewish and heathen elements. Among these were asceticism, the worship of angels, revelling in supposed visions, and belief in emanations. Paul encoun-

tered these ideas at Colossæ and Ephesus, and it is impossible to understand some of the allusions in his letters to these churches without giving attention to these forms of error. To all these topics more particular reference will be made, as occasion may require, in the special introductions to the several epistles.

The reader of the apostle's writings should remember that he lived, labored, and taught in a time of great religious and social unrest, that the religious life of Judaism was exceptionally hollow and formal, and that the Greek and Roman world, into which Christianity must win its way, was plunged into the lowest depths of frivolity and sensuality. The religion of a pure life, which Paul preached, was not adapted to win popularity. The wealth and learning of the time quickly allied themselves against it. The cross was an offence to Jew and Greek alike. Not many of the wise and influential were attracted to the faith of which it was the symbol. But God used the weak things to confound the mighty, and his heavenly wisdom of grace and salvation triumphed over all opposing powers.

V

THE MISSIONARY ADDRESSES OF PAUL

Let us look into the Book of Acts and see how the apostle approached the people of his time with his mes-

sage of salvation through Christ. Three of his missionary addresses have been preserved to us in a somewhat full outline. The first was delivered at Antioch in Pisidia during his first missionary journey. It was spoken in the synagogue at the regular service in response to an invitation from the rulers to address the people. Rendered into a free paraphrase, it is as follows (Acts 13 : 16-41):

The divine selection and preparation of Israel for its Messianic mission (Acts 13 : 16-22)

"Fellow-Israelites, listen to me. The God of our Jewish race set apart our people for a special providential mission and showed them peculiar favor in delivering them from Egyptian bondage. He patiently bore with their disobedience when they wandered in the desert. He drove out their enemies and gave them possession of the promised land for four hundred and fifty years. Then he provided them with judges until the time of Samuel. Later, when the people desired a king, he gave them Saul, the Benjamite, for forty years. Then he gave them David as their king, whom he pronounced to be one who should fulfil his purpose in the guidance and government of his people.

John's testimony to the Messiah (Acts 13 : 23-25)

"In accord with God's purpose revealed through his prophets, the Saviour, Jesus, was born of David's line. As the herald of the Messiah's saving mission to Israel, John the Baptist proclaimed that all must turn from their sins to God. Denying that he was in any sense the Messiah, John asserted the transcendent greatness of the One who was soon to appear.

Christ's life and death a proof of his Messiahship (Acts 13 : 26-29)

"Now, brethren, both you of Jewish blood and you who are bound to us by a common faith in Jehovah, the message of salvation through Christ is meant for us all. The Jewish people and their leaders in condemning Jesus to a shameful death fulfilled the ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah. Though he was convicted of no crime, they insisted upon his death. Thus even in the manner of his crucifixion and burial they were unconsciously fulfilling the ancient predictions.

His resurrection a further fulfilment of prophecy (Acts 13 : 30-37)

"But God burst the bonds of death, and Christ rose and reappeared and mingled again for a time with his disciples, many of whom are at present attesting these facts to our people. And we Christian teachers bring to you the good news that God's ancient promise is now fulfilled for us in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, whereby he is shown to be, as the Psalmist says, God's chosen and beloved Son. Thus the promises made to David reach their perfect realization in his antitype, the Messianic king. The promise that God's chosen One should not be holden of death was not fulfilled in David himself (for after having served the purpose of God in his lifetime he succumbed to death), but it is fulfilled in David's Son, the Christ, who rose triumphant from the grave.

"We bring to you now, fellow-Jews, the message of salvation from your sins through faith in this risen and glorified Saviour. Through him is opened the way to

peace with God, which the observance of the Mosaic law has proved powerless to effect. Beware, now, of rejecting this supreme disclosure of God's mercy and of repeating the history of those neglectful and disobedient ones who, in our past, have been blind to the gracious manifestations of God."

The necessity of accepting the salvation offered by Jesus (Acts 13 : 38-41)

This discourse made a profound impression, and many were favorably inclined to the apostles' teaching. The next Sabbath Paul again addressed the people, but, by this time, the Jews were united in a fixed and intense opposition. Then the apostle declared : " It was, indeed, God's purpose to first make the offer of salvation through Christ to you, O Jews; but now, since you refuse it, we turn to the Gentile world, in fulfilment of the prophetic word which describes Jehovah's Servant as bringing light and salvation to all nations." This saying marked a crisis, a turning-point, in the progress of the gospel and in the history of the church.

The gospel rejected by Jews to be proclaimed to all (Acts 13 : 46, 47)

Later, on the same journey, the people of Lystra were so impressed with the words and deeds of Barnabas and Paul that they called them divinities, and proposed to offer sacrifices to them. At this the apostles were shocked, and, springing into the midst of the crowd, they cried (Acts 14 : 15-18) :

" Men, what are you proposing to do? We are not gods, but only men like yourselves. We are merely bringing you the glad news of salvation—that you should for-

Paul's declaration of the divine goodness (Acts 14 : 15-18)

sake your idols and turn to the one living and true God, the Creator of all things, who has leniently regarded the errors and sins of the nations, not failing to give them tokens of his beneficence in providing them plentifully with the fruits of the earth for their support and pleasure."

The third address to be noticed is that which Paul delivered at Athens (Acts 17 : 22-31). Its substance is as follows :

The proclamation of the character of the one true God and Father of all (Acts 17 : 22-28)

"I observe that you, O Athenians, are more than ordinarily devoted to the worship of your gods. For as I journeyed through your city I beheld on every hand the evidences of your piety—among them an altar dedicated to an unknown god. You thus acknowledge *an unknown* —lying beyond your pantheon ; this One I now make known to you. This true God, the Creator and Lord of all, is not a local divinity, dwelling in sanctuaries of man's making ; nor can men supply his needs as if he were in want of anything, since he is himself the Source of life and Giver of all good. All peoples stand in a common relationship to him ; in his providence he has assigned them their various positions, functions, and careers in order that they may be led to stretch out their hands to him in their darkness, if, peradventure, they might grasp him—though, in fact, he is not far from, but near to, all men ; for all our life, thought, and action are grounded in him, since, as some of your own poets say, we derive our being from him.

"When we think of ourselves thus as sons of God, how impossible it becomes to conceive of the Deity as resembling any material object or work of human skill. God has, indeed, leniently regarded those who, in past times, have so misconceived his nature; but the time has now come when he requires a change of mind toward himself, since he has fixed a day for the just judgment of the world which he will execute in the person of a man whom he has designated for that office, having furnished proof of this appointment of him by raising him from the dead." His claims on mankind to be enforced (Acts 17 : 29-31)

In addition to these examples of Paul's missionary preaching (which may be compared to his "Missionary Epistles," 1 and 2 Thessalonians), we have an outline of his most touching address of instruction and encouragement, spoken to the elders of the Ephesian church, at Miletus, on his return to Jerusalem from his third missionary tour. This address may well be compared with the Pastoral Epistles. No incident of his life reveals more of the heart of the apostle than this at Miletus. In substance, the address is as follows (Acts 20 : 18-35):

"You know with what faithfulness and amid what perils and sufferings I have labored for the cause of Christ since first I came among you; how in public and private, by constant instruction and exhortation I sought to win both Jews and Greeks to repentance and faith. And now I am constrained to go to Jerusalem, though with what result to life and safety I know not; I only know this, The apostle's devotion to his mission (Acts 20 : 18-24)

that I am divinely taught to expect trials and sufferings, wherever I go. But I set no value on my life; all I ask is that I may fulfil the mission which has been entrusted to me as a messenger of God's gracious salvation.

His unsparing zeal (Acts 20: 25-27)

"I am taking my final leave of you, my converts and disciples. I protest that I have not failed to do my utmost to secure the salvation of men, for I have spared no effort in the proclamation of God's purpose of grace.

His exhortation to the leaders of the church to be faithful and to follow his example (Acts 20: 28-35)

"Give careful attention to your own Christian life and to that of the congregation over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, that you may guide and govern the church which God procured for himself by the death of his Son; for I know that when I am gone false teachers will make havoc in the church, and in your own midst, too, will arise misguided men who will seek to gain adherents for their errors. Be on your guard, therefore, recalling how for three years, with yearning tenderness, I constantly warned and encouraged you in the Christian life. And now I commit you to the gracious care and guidance of God, who is able to strengthen your spiritual life and to give you a place among those who are consecrated to him in his heavenly kingdom. I have sought no man's possessions. I have supported myself by my own labor and have contributed to the support of my companions. I have in all things given you an illustration of the way in which you ought to help those who are in need of support, comfort, or instruction, and to recall and practise

the maxim of Jesus: Giving carries with it greater blessing than receiving."

"And when he had thus spoken," continues the simple and touching narrative, "he kneeled down and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way to the ship." (Acts 20: 36-38.)

VI

PAUL'S ADDRESSES IN DEFENCE OF HIMSELF

On three occasions, mentioned in the Book of Acts, Paul was required to defend himself against the accusations of his enemies. In all these cases he told, in part, the story of his life. After his return to Jerusalem from his missionary journeys, some of the Jews accused Paul of speaking against the Jewish nation, the law, and the temple (Acts 21: 28). A great tumult arose; Paul was seized and beaten and would have been killed but for the protection of the Roman garrison. At length the apostle requested leave to speak to the crowd and the military tribune gave him permission. Then Paul, ascending the temple stairs and beckoning for silence, addressed the people in Hebrew, saying: "I was born and reared a strict

Paul's account of his conversion from Judaism to Christianity (Acts 22 : 1-21)

and scrupulous Jew. I became a fierce persecutor of the Christians and was even armed with authority from the high priests to go to Damascus for the purpose of seizing and imprisoning any followers of Jesus whom I might find. As I approached the city a heavenly vision was vouchsafed me and a voice seemed to say: 'Saul, Saul, why are all your energies devoted to thwarting my cause?' To my question 'from whom is this message?' there came the quick response: 'Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.' Convinced at last that the despised Galilean was the Messiah indeed, my risen and living Lord, I humbly asked, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' In reply he directed me, blinded as I was by the vision, to go to the city and seek Ananias, a devout and honored Jewish Christian. Receiving me, the persecutor, as a brother beloved, and restoring my sight, he exhorted me to become an apostle to all mankind, and consecrated me, by the rite of baptism, for the work. Later, when worshipping in the temple, another vision was granted me by which I was shown that I should leave Jerusalem and become a messenger of Christ to the heathen."

Fanatical opposition to the apostle increased and he would have again suffered violence at the hands of the mob had he not been able to assert the rights of a native-born Roman citizen.

After some intervening events the tribune decided to send Paul for trial to the Roman governor, Felix, at

Cæsarea. He left Jerusalem at night under a strong Roman guard, never again to set foot within its walls.

The ecclesiastical authorities at Jerusalem were not so easily foiled. They determined upon a systematic prosecution of Paul before Felix. Five days after his arrival appeared the high priest, Ananias, accompanied by a deputation of elders and a lawyer, Tertullus, to prosecute the case. Tertullus lodged three complaints against Paul: sedition, sectarianism, and profanation of the temple. To these the apostle answered: "These charges cannot be true. I was but twelve days in Jerusalem and I did nothing which was of such a nature as to create any disturbance of the peace. It is true that I am seeking to serve God as a believer in Jesus; but I still sincerely believe in the Old Testament and in the resurrection of the dead. Indeed, at the very time when I was arrested, I was engaged in a religious service—the performance of a vow in the temple. I defy the Jews from Jerusalem, or elsewhere, to show that I am guilty of any offence unless it was an offence for me to exclaim in the sanhedrin (Acts 23:6): I hold with my party, the Pharisees, to belief in a future life and resurrection."

Paul's defence of his conduct (Acts 24: 10-21)

Felix remanded Paul to a mild imprisonment, in which he remained for two years. At length a new governor, Festus, succeeded Felix, and went to Jerusalem to acquaint himself with affairs in his jurisdiction. He was promptly appealed to by Paul's enemies to send the apos-

tle to Jerusalem, their secret purpose being to murder him. Festus refused and directed them to prefer their charges before him at Cæsarea. This they did, but they could not prove their accusations. At last Festus, wishing to win favor with the Jews, asked Paul if he would go to Jerusalem for trial, whereupon the apostle, weary of such delays and indifference to justice, asserted his rights as a Roman citizen and pronounced the decisive words: "*I appeal unto Cæsar.*" Festus, glad, no doubt, to see a prospect of ending the troublesome case, acquiesced: "Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar; unto Cæsar shalt thou go." (Acts 25 : 12.)

Before Paul was sent to Rome, however, Herod Agrippa II. and his sister Bernice came to Cæsarea to pay a complimentary visit to the new governor. Festus naturally narrated to Herod the history and present situation of Paul's case, and the king, moved by curiosity, requested a sight and hearing of the notable prisoner. With great pomp and display Herod and his retinue, with the governor and his chief men, entered the judgment-hall, and Paul was summoned. Festus explained that he was about to send Paul to Rome for trial and did not know just what account to give of him. He requested Agrippa to hear the prisoner and then to help him formulate his case for the emperor. Paul was not here on trial, but on exhibition.

The apostle's defence was, in substance, as follows:

" I am glad, King Agrippa, to explain my cause before you, since you are familiar with all matters of Jewish law and practice. I grew up in the strict belief and observance of my ancestral religion. And now I stand accused because I persist in believing in God's promise to our Jewish nation. And what objection is there to my belief in the resurrection?

Paul's defence of his faith in the Messiah (Acts 26 : 2-8)

" When I persecuted the Christians I was, indeed, conscientious. I was most persistent and unsparing in my cruel treatment of them. But as I was approaching Damascus on my persecuting mission, Christ was miraculously revealed to me as my Lord and Saviour. He called me into his service and sent me on my mission as a preacher to the heathen. I at once began my work by preaching repentance and righteousness. For this the Jews sought my life. But in the strength of God I have gone on in my work of preaching and teaching how, according to prophecy, the Messiah should die and rise and bring salvation both to Jews and Greeks."

How this faith made him a missionary to the Gentiles (Acts 26 : 9-23)

Thereupon Festus interrupted Paul, saying: "What you say cannot be true; your study of this subject has unbalanced your mind;" at which the apostle replied: "No, the facts which I allege were done in the full light of publicity," and then, turning to Agrippa, who was a nominal professor of the Jewish religion, he exclaimed: "You surely will not deny that you believe the prophets; do they not attest my statements?" to which the flippant

king, vexed, no doubt, by this personal appeal, replied, with a tinge of irony: "Really, Paul, you seem to think that you can make a convert of me in short order!" to which the apostle with deepest seriousness replied: "Whether with little or with much persuasion how gladly would I win you to Christ," and then, turning to the courtiers and attendants, he continued: "How gladly would I see you all Christians; only I should wish that you would not have to suffer bonds and imprisonment for your faith, as I have done"—holding up his manacled hands (Acts 26 : 24-29).

The result was that Paul went to Rome for trial, and at length died a martyr to the cause which he so greatly loved.

Those who have visited Rome will remember the "Church of St. Paul outside the walls," a mile or two beyond the gate on the road that leads toward Ostia and the desert. It is, of course, vain to speak of the precise place of the apostle's martyrdom, but ancient tradition places it on the Ostian road, and we may assume that the splendid basilica which commemorates it is not far from the actual site. One who visits it will not easily forget this magnificent monument of the great apostle's martyrdom with its richly gilded arches and gleaming marbles. Across the ceiling is inscribed in letters of gold—*Doctor Gentium*—and such was Paul. But it is not this church with its frigid marbles and its death-like silence

which constitutes the apostle's truest memorial. His imperishable monument is to be found in that church of living stones, that spiritual house of God, which he gave his life to aid in building.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

I

THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA AND THE OCCASION OF PAUL'S WRITING TO IT

The church at Thessalonica was founded soon after Paul had entered Macedonia on his second missionary journey. On arriving in the city the apostle resorted to the synagogue and began to reason with his fellow-countrymen from the Scriptures, "opening and alleging that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead" (Acts 17 : 3). For three Sabbaths Paul continued this effort to convince his hearers that a suffering Messiah was foretold in prophecy, and that the resurrection of Jesus had actually occurred. If he could carry these two points it would be impossible for the Jews to set aside the claim that Jesus was the Christ. His preaching met with considerable success. Some Jews, a number of women of noble birth, and many proselyte Greeks were won to faith in Christ, and of this mixed company the church of Thessalonica was composed. The apostle's success in making converts excited the bitter jealousy of the unbe-

lieving Jews, who raised a mob and drove him and his assistants from the city (Acts 17 : 5 ff.). But the foes of the gospel were too late. The seed sown had already taken a strong and permanent root.

It was natural that, after Paul left Thessalonica, he should be anxious about the infant church which he had founded. Twice he had planned to revisit it, but had been deterred from so doing (1 Thess. 2 : 18) probably by the hostile threats of the Jews. When he could no longer restrain his anxiety to hear from his converts, he sent Timothy (from Athens where he was at the time—see Acts 17 : 15) to learn how they fared and to encourage them in the Christian life (1 Thess. 3 : 1-3). While Timothy was gone, Paul went on to Corinth (Acts 18 : 1). Timothy rejoined the apostle there and brought him his report (1 Thess. 3 : 6). This report was the immediate occasion of the letter. In the main, it was favorable. It testified to the growth of the church, and to their heroic endurance of persecution for the sake of the gospel. Naturally it gave the apostle great satisfaction, and enabled him to write to them in a tone of cheerfulness and hope. The keynote of the epistle is the phrase: "Now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord" (3 : 8).

II

THE DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE

From the circumstances which have been mentioned we should expect that the letter would be chiefly practical. Only one doctrinal topic is touched upon—and that with a purely practical end in view—namely, the second coming of Christ (4 : 13-18). It is well known that the church of the first days expected the speedy return of Christ to earth to raise the dead and to judge the world. The apostles shared this expectation and the Thessalonians had, no doubt, been taught by Paul to expect and to be ready for this glorious event. The early Christians hoped to be living when Christ should come, and to enter at once, without dying, into the joy of their Lord. When, now, some of the Thessalonian Christians died, those who remained became perplexed and anxious over the question whether their deceased brethren would not be at some disadvantage at Christ's coming, as compared with those who should be living. Their idea was that the living would more promptly participate in the Messianic blessedness than the dead. The apostle assures them that this will not be the case; that those who remain till the coming of the Lord will "in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep" (4 : 15), that is, that all believers will enter to-

gether and will share equally in the blessings of Christ's heavenly kingdom (see the paraphrase of 4 : 13-18).

The chief aim of the letter, however, is to congratulate the readers upon their growth and progress in the Christian life, and to exhort them to the steadfast endurance of persecution and to the faithful performance of Christian duty. Incidentally the apostle points out the dangers which threaten them, and rebukes their faults (*e.g.*, 5 : 14).

III

THE DATE OF THE EPISTLE

It is evident that the epistle could not have been written until some little time after the founding of the church. During this interval, as we have seen, Paul had twice formed plans for revisiting Thessalonica, and several members of the church had died. For these events some months, at least, must be allowed. Now we observe that the letter is written in the name of Paul and of his associates, Silas and Timothy (1 : 1). They must, therefore, have been with the apostle at the time of writing. Referring now to the Book of Acts we notice that Paul, Silas, and Timothy are not found together after the time referred to in Acts 18 : 5—that is, after the earlier portion of his long residence in Corinth (Acts 18 : 11). It may there-

fore be stated with great probability that the letter was written at Corinth during the winter of 52-53.

IV

THE FIRST MESSAGE TO THE THESSALONIANS

1. *Salutation and Thanksgiving* (1)

Salutation (1 : 1)

I, Paul, and my companions send to you Thessalonians our Christian greetings and good wishes.

Gratitude for their zeal and readiness to suffer (1 : 2-7)

We are grateful to God for all the fidelity and zeal which you have shown in your Christian life and work. We well know the history of your religious life from the beginning; with what eagerness you received the gospel and what full proof you gave of the Spirit's power dwelling in you—just as you know our zeal in work on your behalf. In this steadfastness and willingness to suffer for your faith, you caught the spirit of our work and of the Lord's life, and set a worthy example to your fellow-Christians far and near. For, indeed, you did, by your faithfulness and endurance, preach the gospel, not only throughout Greece, but throughout the Christian world, so that we have no need to tell the story of your faith to others. On the contrary, we find others ready to tell this story to us. They speak of our great success in winning you to Christ: how you forsook your heathen divinities

Their growth and steadfastness as seen in their history (1 : 8-10)

and believed on the one true God; how you received the doctrines of Christ's resurrection and saving work, and adopted the belief in his second coming.

2. *Paul's Reminiscences and Defence of Himself* (2:1-12)

Charges against the apostle and his assistants and their refutation (2 : 1-12)

You Thessalonians know the nature and effect of our mission when we preached the gospel to you. You know that, before coming to you in our journey, we had been persecuted for our faith and that, despite trials and dangers, we fearlessly taught you the way of salvation. For our preaching does not proceed from false or base motives, but from a conviction of the truth of our message and of our responsibility to God for faithfully declaring it. Our conduct refutes the suspicion of impure motives. We neither sought selfishly to please others nor to gratify ourselves. Though in virtue of our office we might have claimed consideration, we made no such claim. Instead of exacting honor, we rendered affectionate service to you, and gave you—so great was our love to you—not only our truth, but our very hearts. You will also testify that when we were with you, we supported ourselves by our own labor, so that our work might incur no suspicion of being mercenary. I call you, yes, I call God himself to witness to our uprightness, purity, and service when we were among you; how with a love like that of a father we sought your spiritual profit and endeavored to lead you into the God-like life and to prepare you for his heavenly kingdom.

3. *The Thessalonians' Reception of his Message* (2 : 13-16)

The way in which the Thessalonians received the gospel and endured persecution on its behalf (2 : 13-16)

And since God has thus called you to such a glorious destiny, we are thankful that you so heartily accepted his call at our hands and entered upon the life to which it summoned you. This life involved suffering for your faith, but in this you emulated the patience of the Judean churches and endured the same treatment at the hands of your Gentile countrymen as the Jewish Christians did at the hands of the unconverted Jews. These persecutions by the Jews are of a piece with their killing of Jesus and the prophets and with their banishment of us preachers from Judea—conduct whereby they disobey God and oppose the good of mankind, since they seek to prevent us from carrying the message of life to the heathen; conduct by which they are filling up the cup of their iniquity, and for which the final divinely appointed doom is now impending over the nation.

4. *Paul's Desire to Revisit the Thessalonians* (2 : 17-20)

The failure of Paul's plan to visit the church (2 : 17-20)

Our interest in you being such as I have described, our enforced separation from you for a little time was painful to us. We earnestly sought an opportunity to visit you, and I, at least, did so more than once, but unsuccessfully. How gladly would we have visited you! For you give us occasion to rejoice; especially do we rejoice when we contemplate the Lord's coming and think of the praise and the reward that will then be yours.

5. *The Sending of Timothy and His Report* (3 : 1-10)

Timothy reports their faithfulness, growth, and fortitude in persecution (3 : 1-10)

When we could no longer restrain our anxiety for you, we determined to remain alone at Athens, and to send our faithful companion Timothy to visit you and to encourage you in the Christian life, in order that you might not be overcome by the sufferings which, in the course of God's providence, have befallen you. For when we preached to you at Thessalonica we warned you that the Christian life would involve suffering for your faith, as you now see that it does. And this was the reason why I was so anxious concerning you, and so eagerly wished to hear from you; I was afraid lest you should be overcome by your trials and give up your faith. But now since Timothy has just returned from his visit to you, and has reported your steadfastness and your affectionate attachment to us, and desire to see us, our anxiety for you is greatly relieved; it gives me a new lease of life, to know that you are still firm in your Christian faith. How shall we be grateful enough to God for all the comfort which Timothy's report of you has given us? Constantly do we pray that we may yet see you and do something to add to the completeness of your Christian life.

6. *The Apostle's Two Great Desires* (3 : 11-13)

May our gracious Father and our Lord Jesus open the way for our making such a visit, and may the Lord increase the richness and fulness of your love so that it will

flow out to one another and to all men, as our love does toward you, in order that you may be perfectly prepared for the kingdom of Christ at his glorious coming.

Paul desires to visit them and to know of their spiritual progress (3 : 11-13)

7. *A Rebuke of Certain Sins* (4 : 1-8)

In conclusion, we urge you to enter even more deeply into the power of the Christian life which we made known to you, for our instructions must be still fresh in your minds. God requires that you live a holy life; that you refrain from unchastity; that, unlike the heathen, you enter into the marriage relation and preserve it pure from base passion; that you keep yourselves free from covetousness and injustice, for, as we have taught you, the Lord will surely punish such sins. God requires purity, and he who disregards that requirement refuses to obey the will of God, who graciously gives his Spirit to cleanse us from sin.

Unchastity rebuked; purity enjoined (4 : 1-8)

8. *An Exhortation to Brotherly Love* (4 : 9-12)

It is not necessary that I exhort you to the duty of fraternal love; that lesson you have already learned, and you illustrate it in your relation to the Christians of your own province. But we may remind you that love is a growing thing. Aim to possess and to evince it more and more completely in a peaceable and industrious life which will be irreproachable in the eyes of those who are not Christians, and will make you free from all dependence upon the assistance of others.

Progress in the life of love commended (4 9-12)

9. *Comfort in view of the Lord's Coming* (4 : 13-18)

The living and the dead will together enter into the Messianic blessedness (4 : 13-18)

With respect, now, to those of your number who are asleep in death, I wish you to understand their relations to the Lord's coming and the resurrection, so that you may not grieve, as unbelievers do who have no expectation of a resurrection or eternal life. For the belief of the Christian, that Jesus rose from the dead, carries with it the conviction that the dead who are united to him will be joined in eternal fellowship with him. For the Lord's own teaching respecting his coming assures us that those of us who are living at the time of his return will not more promptly enter into the blessedness of his kingdom than will those disciples who have died. For this will be the order of events: The Lord will come from heaven with signs of power and glory; thereupon will occur the resurrection of the Christian dead; following that, we that are living at the time will be caught up into the sky to enter upon an eternal blessed fellowship with the Lord. Let these assurances solace your grief with regard to those members of your church who have passed away.

10. *Various Exhortations and Warnings* (5)

The Lord's coming: its different consequences for saints and for sinners (5 : 1-11)

But it is not necessary that I should dwell upon the order of events connected with the advent, for you are aware that the Lord will return suddenly and unexpectedly. While sinners are living in a false security, this dread event and its accompanying judgment will break suddenly

upon them and overwhelm them. But to you, my Christian friends, that event will wear a different aspect. You are God's children and will welcome his Son when he comes; let us then be ready and watching and waiting for his return. Those who are sunken in indifference and sin will be unprepared, but we believers must be equipped with Christian virtue and expectation, and be ready, assured that God's purpose for us is a purpose, not of condemnation, but of grace, since he gave Christ to die for us that, whether we live or die, we should share in his glory. Therefore comfort and edify one another with this hope.

Maxims for the Christian life (5 : 12-22)

Recognize the labors on your behalf of your teachers and rulers, and accord them all proper honor. Cultivate a quiet, orderly, helpful, generous, and patient life. Avoid revenge, and seek to promote the best interests of each other and of all men. Let Christian joy, constant prayerfulness, and gratitude to God, the requirements of God's gracious will, mark your life. Welcome God's Spirit; respect his gifts, testing them all, preserving and using only what is helpful to the spiritual life.

Benediction, and recommendation concerning the reading of the letter (5 : 23-28)

And may God, the Source of all spiritual blessing, keep you perfect till the coming of Christ. Seek God's blessing for us. Let those who receive this letter greet the other members of the church with the kiss of peace, and read this letter to the assembled congregation; and may the grace of Christ be with you.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

I

A LATER CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE THESSALONIAN CHURCH

This Second Epistle reflects essentially the same conditions as the First. In its general tone and contents it closely resembles the earlier letter, to which it makes at least one allusion (compare 2 Thess. 2 : 1 with 1 Thess. 4 : 17). Since, therefore, it was evidently written with the previous letter vividly in mind, and since the conditions at Thessalonica seem to have been much the same as when the First Epistle was written, it is reasonable to conclude that the second letter was written at Corinth not long after the first—that is, in the year 53.

Since the writing of the earlier letter the church had continued to progress in faith and usefulness and to endure their increasing persecutions with fortitude (1 : 3, 4). The epistle makes it clear that fanatical hatred on the part of the Jews toward the believers was on the increase, and that the apostle's heart was deeply stirred with grief and indignation as he contemplated the sufferings of his

beloved converts. This epistle is much more passionate than the First. Many of its passages are dark with prophecies of speedy judgment and destruction for the enemies of the faith (see, *e.g.*, 1 : 5-9; 2 : 8-12). This anti-Christian power which is afflicting the church the Lord Jesus shall quickly and utterly destroy at his glorious coming (see the paraphrase of 2 : 1-12). There were other causes for anxiety also. Some members of the church were idle and disorderly (3 : 6, 10, 11). Again, a spurious letter, purporting to come from the apostle, was in circulation, which he was compelled to repudiate (2 : 2), and which occasioned his reminding his readers that he always appended the closing salutation to his letters in his own handwriting (3 : 17).

This epistle affords us an instructive glimpse into the experience of the apostle and into the life of the early church. Few portions of the New Testament throw more light upon the trying conditions under which Paul carried on his arduous missionary labors and upon the way in which by his teachings and exhortations he encouraged his struggling and suffering converts.

II

THE APPLICATION OF THE IDEA OF THE SECOND COMING IN THE THESSALONIAN CHURCH

As in the earlier letter, the only doctrinal topic which is treated is the second coming of Christ. The subject had entered upon a new phase. The counterfeit epistle represented Paul as teaching that the Lord's coming was in the immediate future (2 : 2). In consequence, many had abandoned their employments, taking no further interest in their practical secular duties (see 3 : 10-12). Paul insists that he had never represented the day of the Lord's coming as on the very point of dawning, and rebukes the fanatical spirit which this idea had helped to develop. He assures his readers, on the contrary, that certain other events—a development and manifestation of extraordinary wickedness which he calls a "mystery of lawlessness" (2 : 7)—will precede the Lord's coming. This evil power is now working in secret, being held in check by a superior force, which Paul calls "the restrainer" or "that which restrains" (2 : 6, 7). Not till this repressive force is taken away (2 : 7) will the evil power fully manifest itself.[1] Then, and not till then, should the second com-

[1] What was this Satanic power and what the restraining force? I hold that the former was Jewish anti-Christian fanaticism, and the latter the Roman empire. This view corresponds to history. Jewish persecuting zeal was the first great foe of the church and the greatest hindrance to the apostle's labors. The Roman power protected the early Church in a measure

ing be expected. It will be observed that Paul's aim here is the very practical one of diverting the attention of his readers in a measure from the subject of the second coming, the contemplation of which had produced an unwholesome effect, by turning their thoughts in another direction. It is to be regretted that we do not know the result of this effort or the later course of events in this perplexed and persecuted church. With the close of our epistle the curtain falls upon the church of Thessalonica.

The Thessalonian Epistles compose the first group of Paul's letters. They stand in close connection with his missionary labors, and, as we have seen, illustrate the method and manner of his missionary teaching during the earlier period of his career as a founder of churches.

III

THE SECOND MESSAGE TO THE THESSALONIANS

1. *Salutation, Thanksgiving, and Commendation* (1)

Salutation (1 : 1, 2)

I, Paul, and my companions, send to the church at Thessalonica wishes of grace and peace.

from the assaults of its Jewish enemies (see, *e.g.*, Acts 19 : 35-41 ; 22 : 22-29). The guarded and obscure language of the apostle about the "taking away" of the restraining power, the destruction of the Roman empire, favors the same conclusion. He would naturally speak cautiously on such a subject. For fuller explanation and for the various views I would refer the reader to such critical commentaries as those of Jowett, Alford, Lange, and Meyer.

We must always be grateful to God for your growth in Christian fidelity, and for your mutual love. Wherever we go among the churches, we praise your Christian fortitude and faithfulness as shown in your endurance of persecutions for the name of Christ. This suffering of yours is a clear proof that in the righteous judgment of God you will be thought worthy of his kingdom, while, at the same time, it is a token that God will justly punish those who persecute you. To you he will, at the Lord's glorious coming, recompense peace for your sufferings; to your wicked persecutors he will mete out their just penalty, utter exclusion from the Lord's presence, and from the blessedness of his kingdom. While he will be terrible to his enemies, he will be an object of praise and admiration to his people, to those who have believed on him (as you have). In order that this blessedness may be yours, we continually pray that your Christian consecration may prove sincere and complete, and that God may bless you with all spiritual blessings in Christ.

Thanksgiving for their faith and love (1 : 3, 4)

Commendation of their steadfastness (1 : 5-12)

2. *Instruction regarding Christ's Advent* (2 : 1-12)

Regarding this glorious advent of Christ, and the assembling of believers with him, we urge you not to be thrown into sudden excitement or alarm either by prophetic utterances on the part of your own number, or by unwarranted appeals to our oral teaching, or by reference to any letter purporting to come from us, and which repre-

The Lord's advent not to be immediately expected (2 : 1, 2)

sents us as teaching that the day of the Lord's coming is just on the point of dawning. Do not be deceived on this subject. I tell you plainly that certain events will occur before the Lord comes. There will be a signal manifestation of wickedness, culminating in the appearance of a false Messiah who shall make the most blasphemous pretensions, even setting himself up as an object of supreme worship. Do you not recall my teaching on this point? At present there is a certain power which is repressing these evil forces, so as to prevent their premature manifestation. In secret they are working and preparing to break forth, but some one is holding them in check. For a time he will restrain them; then he will himself be removed, and thereupon the one who embodies this wickedness will assert himself. The Lord will then come in his glory and power, and utterly destroy the monstrous pretender who with Satanic wickedness sought to deceive sinful men and to prevent them from being saved by Christ. Because these sinners preferred falsehood to truth, God delivered them over to the consequences of their own wicked folly, that their preference for evil might meet its just condemnation.

Events which will precede it (2 : 3-12)

3. *Exhortations and Warnings* (2 : 13 to 3 : 18)

We must always be grateful to God, dear brethren, for his gracious calling of you into the Christian life—a call which you realized in a renewed character, and in the

appropriation of the gospel, which you received at our hands, that you might attain the blessedness offered in Christ. Steadfastly adhere to the instruction which we have given you orally and by letter. And may Christ, the Ruler of the Church, and the gracious God of love, strengthen you and fit you for every Christian duty.

Gratitude for their conversion and exhortation to perseverance (2 : 13-17)

In conclusion, pray that our preaching of the gospel may be successful—as much so as it was in your case—and that we may escape the persecutions of unbelieving and fanatical opponents. God will be true to you, will strengthen and keep you. We believe, too, that you will observe our requirements. And may Christ cause you to be filled with love to God, and with a patient endurance like that of Christ.

Exhortations to prayer and faithfulness (3 : 1-5)

With respect to those who, refusing our instruction, adopt unseemly courses of life, we direct you, on the authority of Christ, to avoid their company. We set you an example, when among you, of the conduct required. We supported ourselves by continual labor, that we might occasion no complaint. Although we might with propriety have accepted support from you, we preferred, for the sake of setting you an example of independence, to forego this right. And when we preached to you we strictly enjoined the duty of self-support. There are some of you who are disregarding this injunction, and have given themselves up to idleness and mischief. Now to such we say, in the name of Christ, that they resume their

How to deal with the fanatical and disorderly (3 : 6-15)

occupations and their self-support. Steadfastly adhere to what is right and proper. And if any member of the church longer persists in disobeying this direction, withdraw from all association with him, that he may be led to regret and abandon his evil course. Do not, however, forget that he is a fellow-Christian, or fail to direct him back, if possible, to the right way. And may Christ, the Author of peace, ever dwell with you and bless you with his peace. And now with my own hand I add these closing words of greeting, which are a mark of genuineness in all my letters—such is my handwriting. The grace of Christ be with you.

Benediction and salutation (3 : 16-18)

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

I

THE GREAT DOCTRINAL LETTERS

The second group of Paul's epistles—Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans—includes his most elaborate exposition and defence of his gospel of grace and faith. Of these Galatians and Romans are more doctrinal or theoretic, and the Corinthian epistles more practical or ethical. In Galatians and Romans the apostle has constantly in view the theology of Pharisaism, in which he had been trained and whose central idea was that salvation is achieved by deeds of obedience to the Mosaic law. Paul had learned by experience the falseness and futility of this doctrine of salvation. For years as a Pharisee he had sought peace with God and with his own conscience on this path, and had failed to find it. At length he had learned that salvation is not achieved by human deserving, but is freely bestowed upon condition of a humble and trustful acceptance and self-surrender. The fruitless effort of Paul to find peace by works of the law and the revelation to him of a new and better way are strikingly

described in Rom. 7 : 7-25. After he had learned this new way of salvation, he was eager to persuade others of its truth and, especially, to prevent his converts from adopting the Jewish doctrine, or from attempting to combine it with the principle of faith. Hence his eager polemic against Jewish teaching in Galatians and Romans. In the Corinthian epistles this subject does not come into the foreground, because at Corinth other questions were more pressing; but even there echoes of the great controversy are not wanting.

II

THE GALATIAN CHURCHES

The Galatians were a people of Celtic origin, who settled in Central Asia Minor in the third century before Christ. Of this territory Ancyra was the principal city.

The Roman province called Galatia, however, was of much greater extent and included Pisidia, Lycaonia, and part of Phrygia to the south of Galatia proper. It is a question much discussed among scholars whether Paul uses "Galatia" in the narrower, ethnological sense or in its wider, political application. The former has been the more common view. It was thought to be favored by the fact that Luke, in Acts 16 : 6 and 18 : 23, uses "the Galatian country" in the narrower sense. But if this view be

taken we have then to suppose that the founding of the Galatian churches is passed over in silence by Luke, and that the history of Paul's relations with Galatia which, as we learn from the epistle, was so important a factor in his life-work, must be read between the lines in the Book of Acts.

If the wider meaning of "Galatia" be taken, then the churches of Antioch, Iconium, Derbe and Lystra, founded on the first missionary journey (Acts 14), were Galatian churches, and we may suppose that the epistle was intended primarily for them. Let us note two or three facts which favor this view. In Gal. 2 : 5 Paul says that at the apostolic council at Jerusalem (Acts 15), he contended against the Judaizers for his doctrine of justification by faith "in order that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Galatians). At this time the churches of Galatia, in the narrower sense, were not yet founded. How much more natural, then, to suppose that he had in mind the churches of "South Galatia." Again: It is easier to explain the presence of Judaizing agitators in the Galatian churches if we suppose that by that term the churches of South Galatia are primarily intended. Is it likely that these agitators from Jerusalem would pass by the churches of Antioch and Iconium where there were Jewish synagogues (Acts 13 : 14 ; 14 : 1), and betake themselves to the more distant Gentile communities of North Galatia? From many considerations, of which these are only examples, it

seems probable that Paul's use of Galatia, like that of Peter (1 Pet. 1 : 1) was the broader or political one, and that the churches to which our epistle was written were those founded on the first missionary journey. To this view an increasing number of scholars now assent.

III

THE JUDAIZING CRUSADE

When a Christian adopted the idea that works of the law, for example, circumcision, were necessary to salvation, in addition to faith in Christ, he was said to "Judaize," that is, to adopt the Jewish theory of religion. Those who thus believed or taught were called "Judaizers." Such teachers were constantly invading Paul's churches and representing him as inferior in authority to the primitive apostles to whom they claimed to appeal (see Acts 15 : 1 ; Gal. 2 : 6). In Galatia they had obtained so strong a footing that Paul feared lest his work there should be quite undone by them (Gal. 4 : 11).

That such a class of persons should exist in the early church was but natural. The first Christians were Jews and had been trained to believe that God approved of men in proportion to their observance of the Mosaic law. Instead of laying chief stress upon the great moral

duties emphasized in the law, the popular teaching attached primary importance to its ritualistic requirements, especially to circumcision. Their teaching was an illustration of the difficulty with which men adopt a new principle in religion. That faith in Christ was necessary they did not deny, but they insisted that the keeping of the law was also necessary. It was an effort to combine two inconsistent theories of salvation.

IV

THE AIM AND DATE OF THE EPISTLE

Paul wrote the epistle to show that faith in Christ was the sole and sufficient condition of salvation; but he also found it necessary to repel certain insinuations which his Judaizing opponents had disseminated among his converts, thereby weakening their confidence in his message. They asserted that his teaching was inadequate because he did not enjoin the observance of the law, and that he was inconsistent in the application of his professed principles. The apostle begins the epistle by setting forth the divine origin and authority of his message. He has not received it from any human source, but from God. Then he shows that the primitive apostles, Peter, James, and John, approved of his teaching at the Jerusalem council,

and that, at Antioch, when Peter showed a tendency to "Judaize," he rebuked his inconsistency and demonstrated to him the sufficiency of faith. Thus Paul unhesitatingly defends the unquestioned truth and convincing power of his gospel (1, 2). Then he shows how the Old Testament itself supports his doctrine. Abraham was justified by faith. The law was a preparatory system which has served its purpose and has now passed away. Christianity is complete and sufficient and does not need to be supplemented from Judaism (3 : 1 to 5 : 12). The apostle closes with a practical application and an appeal to his readers to maintain their Christian liberty and to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit (5 : 13 to 6 : 18).

The date of the epistle cannot be accurately determined. The more common view is that it was written at Ephesus within the years 54-56 A.D. The present tendency of scholarship, however, is toward assigning to it a still earlier date (A.D. 53). Some even regard it as the earliest of Paul's letters. An indication that it was written not long after Paul had founded the churches of Galatia has commonly been found in the words: "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you" (God); but the phrase "so quickly" is too indefinite to warrant this conclusion. On the other hand, a considerable time must be allowed for the coming of the Judaizers to Galatia, and for that extension of their influence to which the epistle refers. But this consideration is doubly indefinite

in view of the question, already noticed, as to whether the "Galatian" churches were founded on the first or the second missionary journey. All that can be confidently said is that Galatians is the earliest of Paul's great doctrinal letters.

V

THE MESSAGE TO THE GALATIANS

1. *The Salutation* (1 : 1-5)

Reality of Paul's apostleship asserted (1 : 1-5)

I affirm the genuineness of my apostleship (which my opponents in Galatia have called in question), and declare that I did not receive my commission from any human source, but from God, through a revelation of the risen and glorified Christ, who died to save us from sin in fulfilment of the purpose of God, to whom be eternal praise!

2. *The Truthfulness of Paul's Teaching* (1 : 6-10)

His doctrine of salvation the one true gospel (1 : 6-10)

I am surprised that so soon after your conversion you should have deserted the doctrine of grace, which I taught you, for that of works, which may be called a "different gospel," but might better (since there is but one true gospel) be called no gospel at all. This counter-teaching only aims to mislead you and to overthrow the true Christian doctrine. My teaching is true, and I should denounce

any pretended "gospel" which was subversive of it, even though it were delivered by an angel from heaven; should any man teach contrary to my doctrine of grace and faith, I pronounce a curse upon him. I justify this boldness and vehemence by the confident assurance that in my preaching I am not seeking human favor, but obeying God's will.

3. *The Divine Origin of his Gospel* (1 : 11-17)

This teaching derived from no human source but from Christ (1 : 11–17)

As a ground for my strong assertions, I allege the certainty that my teaching is not shaped by a human standard nor derived from a human source, but that it came to me by a revelation of Jesus Christ. My zealous adherence to the Jewish religion which led me to become the persecutor of the church, is proof that I could not have been transformed into a Christian apostle by mere human means. It was only when God, who had a great purpose to serve in my life, was pleased to reveal Christ as the truly risen and glorified Messiah to my spirit, that I became a Christian and a missionary. After this event no more than before can my course be explained as a result of human influence or instruction; I did not resort (as may be supposed) to the primitive apostles at Jerusalem, there to be taught the truths which I proclaim; on the contrary, I went away into the remote regions of Arabia, whence I returned to Damascus (rather than to Jerusalem).

4. *Paul's Activity after his Conversion* (1 : 18-24)

After my conversion my course was such as to prove my independence of human teachers. For three years I did not see Jerusalem and the authorities of the church there. At the expiration of that period, however, I went thither to interview Peter, but my visit was a brief one. I saw only one other apostle. I solemnly allege the truth of these statements. I next returned through Syria to my native province. My brief stay in Jerusalem and Judea occasioned, indeed, a new interest and rejoicing at my conversion, but I was not there long enough for the churches at large to know me even by sight.

Paul was not instructed by the primitive apostles (1 : 18-24)

5. *The Approval of Paul's Gospel by the Primitive Apostles* (2 : 1-10)

It was fourteen years before I again visited Jerusalem; when I did so it was in response to an impulse from the Spirit, and with the desire to be assured by the apostles there in person that my teaching was acceptable to them. So far from their criticising or amending my teaching they did not even require the circumcision of my Gentile travelling companion, Titus (though in the circumstances to do this might have been natural and, in itself, allowable); there were, indeed, those who urged it, but I refused to allow it because of the presence of Pharisaic extremists who, by insisting upon the necessity of circum-

Nor did they criticise his doctrine at any time (2 : 1-10).

cision in order to the attainment of salvation, sought to restrict our freedom, as Christians, from the law, and to put us again under its burdens ; to have yielded would, in this case, have compromised the essential principles of the gospel. The influential primitive apostles (and however great their influence or authority might be, it could not affect the truth and divineness of my mission, since God's approval does not follow human judgment) did not in any way attempt to supplement or correct my teaching, but rather agreed that I had a divine commission to continue my present work among the Gentiles as truly as had Peter to proceed with his among the Jews ; this conviction was based upon our success in our respective spheres of labor. The three who were present at this interview accordingly approved the course and teaching of myself and Barnabas, and in token of this approval gave us the right hand of fellowship, and commended us in our Gentile-Christian mission, only urging us to continue mindful of the poor Christians at Jerusalem, and to collect from the wealthier Gentile churches contributions to their support, thus keeping this bond of Christian charity between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, and, by so doing, helping to prevent jealousy and alienation.

6. *Peter's Action at Antioch* (2 : 11-21)

On a later occasion at Antioch, also, I maintained my independence. Peter had been accustomed, when there,

to mingle freely with the Gentile converts who had not been circumcised, eating at the same table with them at the love-feasts. But certain Judaizers, alleging the authority of James for their opposition, had opposed this fellowship with the uncircumcised, and Peter, on this occasion, timidly yielded to this persuasion and withdrew from the company. For this I rebuked him because he was worthy of blame. The other Jewish Christians followed his example, not excepting my companion Barnabas. Deeply feeling that the integrity and sole sufficiency of the gospel was compromised by this action, I publicly challenged Peter in the matter as follows: How is it that you now deviate from your ordinary and normal course of freely associating with Gentile converts, and not only renounce that course but go farther and by your action demand that even Gentiles shall live as do the Jews; that is, be circumcised and observe the law? We Jewish Christians have long ago learned that it is faith in Christ, not works of law, which saves us. How is it, then, that you now act as if legal observance was also necessary, thus inconsistently, by your action, denying that the faith which we hold is sufficient? If now we again resort to the legal course, may it not give occasion to say that we confess ourselves still unforgiven sinners and that Christ, so far from delivering us from sin and its curse, plunges us deeper into them? We cannot admit any such conclusion, and no more can we tolerate any principle of

The independence and strength of Paul's position shown in his rebuke of Peter's Judaizing at Antioch (2 : 11-14a)

Peter's action inconsistent with his Christian faith (2 : 14b-16)

It makes him and not the Gentile the sinner (2 : 17, 18)

action which (like yours in this case) gives occasion to it. The real "transgressor," the "sinner," is not the man who renounces the law altogether and clings solely to Christ (as we all should), but it is he who endeavors still to maintain and even to insist upon the observance of the legal system whose renunciation as a means of salvation is logically involved in the very idea of Christian faith, which means the sole sufficiency and necessity of Christ. Hence it is the Judaizing course, rather than that of the Gentile Christians, which stamps those who pursue it as "sinners," or unjustified persons, by the tacit confession contained in the idea that something additional to faith in Christ is needful. For the law itself through its revelation of my sin to me and its ethical death-sentence, slew me. I thus broke all relation to the law, as earthly relations are broken by death. I died with Christ on the cross, to the old life and old relations, and yet, in a new and higher sense, I live; or rather, it would be more correct to say, that Christ lives in me, for my new spiritual life has its source and support in him, who, through love, gave himself up to death for my salvation. Thûs I in my teaching magnify God's grace (as is not the case with those who still cling to the law and to works), and well I may, for if men could ever have been justified by the law, Christ need not have died; and, since it is an axiom with all Christians that Christ's death was not for naught, that fact may prove the entire futility of seeking righteousness in any other way than through faith in him.

No other view justifies the cross (2 : 19–21)

7. *The Antagonism between the Judaizing Doctrine and the Gospel* (3 : 1-14)

Exhortation to the readers to be true to their experience and principles (3 : 1-11)

You Galatians have been drawn away as if by magic from the truth so plainly taught you, that you were saved through Christ's death. Reflect whether, when you were converted, you received the gift of the Spirit by the doing of meritorious works, or by obeying the call simply to believe on Christ. Of course, the latter was the case. Will you, then, after having begun the life of the Spirit, fall back upon that lower plane where the flesh is the ruling element of life—a power from which the law is unable to deliver you? What folly to endure persecution for the gospel, when you do not really remain true to it! Have not all your spiritual gifts come to you in the line of faith, and not of works? Be true, then, to this principle, and renounce the rival and futile principle of legal works of merit. From the typical case of Abraham you may learn the truth which I am urging. He was not justified by works, but by faith; now all believers are his spiritual sons, and are saved in the same manner. The Old Testament recognizes the universal validity of the principle of faith. On the contrary, those who stand upon the plane of law and seek to be saved by obedience to it will fail, for an absolutely perfect performance of all that the law requires is necessary in order to justification by law, and that man can never render. The law-principle says: Do

all that the law requires and thou shalt live; the faith-principle says: Trust in God and thou shalt live.

The law would condemn us, but Christ saves us from its curse (3 : 12–14)

These principles indicate two different methods of salvation, and the Scripture sanctions the latter as the only practicable one. So far from having hope of being saved by the law, man had fallen under its curse and was helpless, but Christ, by taking the curse upon himself, freed us from it, that we might be justified and saved simply by trusting in him and his work for us.

8. *The True Relation between the Gospel and the Law* (3 : 15-22)

The inviolable promise to Abraham preceded the law (3 : 15-18)

Even a covenant between men, when once ratified, no third party may annul or supplement with new provisions; much less may God's gracious covenant of promise with Abraham be affected in its conditions and provisions by any subsequent dispensations. Now the promise to Abraham's seed is fulfilled only in Christ, and thus an identity and continuity of principle exist between that ancient covenant and the Christian gospel. Now the law which was given so long after this primitive gospel cannot affect its validity or change its provisions, and since salvation cannot be both by works and by faith, we must adhere to the more original and fundamental principle.

The law subordinate and educative (3 : 19–22)

What purpose, then, did the law serve if not that of justifying men? It showed them their need of justification, and the impossibility of themselves achieving it, because

it made them conscious of the depth and heinousness of their sins; thus this divinely ordained system was designed to lead men to Christ for salvation, rather than to be itself a means of saving them. It was a dispensation given to men through the agency of Moses; it was, therefore, mediate and conditional. But in giving the promise, and so in promulgating the gospel of faith, God stands forth alone and acts in independence and sovereignty. Hence the promise stands on a higher plane than the law. But it does not follow from this difference that the two dispensations, and their characteristic principles, are in all respects contrary. The legal system is subordinate to the gospel, but it serves the ends of the gospel; it must be subordinate, for otherwise the gospel would not have been needed as a saving agency. But it serves the ends of the gospel by teaching men their sinfulness, putting them in the prison-houses of remorse and despair until they shall long for the gracious deliverance which Christ freely offers to those who trust in him.

9. *The Preparatory Office of the Law* (3 : 23-29)

The law a tutor imposing restrictions (3 : 23-25)

It was the office of the law to imprison us by its condemnation until we should be set free by believing on Christ. The law may be called our tutor who, by his strict requirements and stern discipline, prepared us for Christ and made us glad to find freedom and peace in him by faith. But now, as believers, we are no longer subject to

this severe master, but possess the sense of liberty and sonship through Christ. For truly all believers have entered into a unique relation to Christ which affects their whole attitude and standing. The distinctions of nationality, condition, and sex are as nothing in the presence of that deeper unity which binds together all believers in Christ, so that all who believe, regardless of these distinctions, are really Abraham's seed (since Abraham's great significance was not in the fact that he was a Jew, but in the fact that he was a man of faith), and therefore inherit the blessings promised to him and to his seed in the covenant which God made with him.

Faith is a relation of freedom and sonship (3 : 26-29)

10. *Man's Position under the Law and under the Gospel* (4:1-7)

Full sonship attained only under the gospel (4 : 1-7)

The heir, before he attains his majority, can no more enter upon the actual possession of his destined estate, than can a bondservant in the family possess himself of it. Until the set time he must continue in a subordinate position, under the authority and discipline of others. The position of us Jewish Christians under the law was analogous. We were as children, having a great inheritance (the gospel) in prospect, but kept in a preparatory process of training; the coming of Christ marked the period of release from this tutelage and of entrance upon the promised possession. This full sense of sonship is imparted by the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the heart

of the believer, assuring him of the divine fatherhood; hence we are no longer in the position of servants, but in that of the sons of full age in the family who have attained the clear consciousness of sonship and with it have entered upon their rightful, destined possession.

11. *The Inferiority of the Law* (4 : 8-11)

The law means bondage; the gospel liberty (4 : 8-11)

We were all in bondage before we became Christians, either to the law, or under a worse master, idolatry; but since we have through Christ learned to know the true and only God, or rather, since he has made himself known to us, how unreasonable in us to wish to return to an elementary stage of religion again, by continuing to adhere to Jewish ordinances. That is like going back to bondage after having been once set free. This you Galatians are doing; your observance of Jewish feast-days and ceremonies makes me afraid that my labor among you will prove to have been for naught.

12. *The Galatians' Present Disregard of Paul Undeserved and Unwise* (4 : 12-20)

A personal appeal to the readers (4 : 12-16)

Let me plead with you to come to my point of view in this matter, even as I, in renouncing Judaism, put myself upon the same plane with you Gentiles. I hope for this result from my experience of your former kindness and attachment, for I remember that when I was detained

among you by sickness, in consequence of which I became your Christian teacher, you did not consider my presence among you burdensome, nor did your regard fail to endure the test to which it was put; on the contrary, you received me with the utmost, indeed, with excessive, honor. But all seems changed now! You now appear not to count it any felicity to receive and obey my instructions. How great the change of temper, for when I was among you, you would gladly have made the greatest sacrifice for me. Have I become the object of your enmity because I now urge upon you the true and only gospel?

The motives of Paul's opponents (4 : 17-20)

The Judaizers who are leading you astray from my teaching are indeed eager in courting your favor, but it is in no good spirit and for no good end; what they really seek is to impart to you an exclusive and partisan spirit, that they may attach you to themselves as followers and supporters. It is always well to be zealously sought after by others if the object of this enthusiasm is a worthy one. I do not begrudge you this attention from others; when I am absent others must exercise this care. My children, so great is my anxiety for you on account of your defection from the truth, that I seem to be again undergoing the pains and labors by which you were brought into the church. I should be glad to be personally present with you, and to adopt a less censorious tone; for I am perplexed and uncertain whether I can by any means win you back, and would gladly make all possible efforts.

13. *An Allegorical Argument* (4 : 21 to 5 : 1)

The difference between the law and the gospel allegorically illustrated (4 : 21-28)

My readers who are familiar with the Old Testament will readily recall the history of Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, the former the child of the bondwoman, Hagar, whose birth was merely in the ordinary course of nature, and Isaac, the child of Sarah, born in accordance with a divine promise. These persons and events have an allegorical significance. The two women, Hagar and Sarah, represent respectively the Old and the New Testament systems; the former—the bondwoman—corresponds to the covenant whose sign or symbol is Mount Sinai, since her children, like those who continue under the Old Covenant, are brought forth in and for a state of bondage. Now this analogy is the more appropriate because Mount Sinai is actually situated in Arabia, the land of Hagar's descendants. If, then, Hagar fitly represents Sinai, she may as fitly be said to represent the earthly city of Jerusalem, which stands as a symbol of the Jewish religion. Sinai and Jerusalem have the same religious significance. Jerusalem (personified as the mother of the Jewish people), like Hagar and her descendants, is in bondage with her children. But the upper Jerusalem, the spiritual commonwealth, typified by Sarah, is free, and since she is the mother of all believers, her children (Christians) are also free. Our spiritual mother may rejoice, therefore, in the language of ancient prophecy concerning the hope of the

childless; and we, her spiritual children, like Isaac, are heirs of God's gracious promise, made to all believers.

Application of the allegory (4 : 29 to 5 : 1)

But as in ancient days, so now, the spiritual must suffer persecution from the unspiritual. But, as then, the Ishmaelites were rejected from the true theocracy, so now shall the unfree Jews, who persist in refusing their spiritual freedom in Christ, be excluded from the people of God. We are free, then; let us maintain and prize our freedom, and not surrender it by returning to the bondage with which the law enslaves those who try to be saved by its works.

14. *No Justification by Ceremonial Acts* (5 : 2-12)

There cannot be two ways of salvation (5 : 2-6)

To receive circumcision as being necessary to salvation is a virtual renunciation of Christ. When one submits to this rite as a condition of justification, he thereby commits himself to the legal method, and, by the very meaning of his act, is bound to do all that the law requires, and must do this, if he is to be saved. You Galatians, in so doing, are cutting your life loose from Christ by renouncing the faith-principle of salvation, and are already turned away from God's free grace in the attempt to achieve your own salvation by works of merit. I assure you of your great error and certain failure, for we who hold to the opposite course base all our hope upon the grace in which we trust; and rightly so, for, with reference to the attainment of salvation, the question whether

one is circumcised or not is of no importance, the only essential condition being a faith which by love gives evidence of its vital power. You were making good progress in Christian life and knowledge. Who has checked you in this and led you into such disloyalty to the truth? Their dissuasion of you from the right path is not in line with God's call. This wrong tendency is indeed serious, for, though the defection be limited, it will spread like leaven. I have good hope, however, that you Galatians as a whole will not be led astray by this error, but will continue faithful to my instructions; but the leader in this sedition will receive a heavy chastisement. As for the accusation of the Judaizers, that I too, upon occasion, preach circumcision, it involves an absurdity; they would not continue to persecute me if I were not in antagonism to them; if their accusation were true, there would no longer be any offence to the Jews from my preaching of the cross; but the fact that my work still arouses Jewish opposition proves their charge untrue. These extremists who pervert your faith and hinder your Christian growth, who set such value on circumcision, should have it to the point of mutilation!

The Judaizing view inconsistent and absurd (5 : 7–12)

15. *The Right Use of Christian Freedom* (5 : 13-15)

I speak thus vehemently, for you, Christian brethren, were destined, in your divine call, for the enjoyment of

Christian liberty means freedom to love and serve (5 : 13-15)

freedom from these legal requirements. This freedom, however, does not mean lawlessness, but requires a loving service to others; the very law, indeed, which you now profess to keep so zealously, is summed up in the supreme requirement of the gospel. But if, instead of living the life of love, you continue in disputes, such as that now prevailing, the result must be the utter destruction of your Christian fellowship.

16. *The Spiritual and the Natural Life Contrasted* (5 : 16-26)

The inner must rule the outer life (5 : 16-26)

My advice is: Live under the power of the Spirit and, in so doing, you will find the true safeguard against the evils of which I warn you. For there is a sharp conflict in Christian men between the inspiration of the Spirit and the sinful impulses which operate to prevent your doing what your conscience would prompt. But if you keep your lives under the guidance of the Spirit you shall have the victory over evil, because you will not then be under that condemnation and bondage which they experience who live under the law, but will enjoy the sense of freedom and pardon which the Spirit imparts. Now by considering the sins which spring from natural impulse, you will see how wholly incompatible they are with participation in the kingdom of God, and by contemplating the fruit in human life of the Spirit's guidance, you will see, too, that

those who produce it cannot be under the bondage of sin and the sentence of the law, since those virtues are the essential requirements of all law. Now Christians have put to death the impulses which lead to the works of the flesh. If, then, we have our life in the power of the Spirit and not of the flesh, let our outward action be ruled by the true power of Christian living—that of the Spirit; let us not act as if we were ruled by the contrary and inconsistent principle which excites factious boasting, leading to the challenging of one another to conflicts and to jealous retaliation.

17. *The Christian Law of Love* (6 : 1-5)

Brethren, if sin overtake one of your number, you who are guided by the Spirit should correct the fault and restore the man in a temper of gentleness, remembering that you too may be similarly tempted and may need a similar forgiveness. The true law which you are to obey is that of Christ, which requires you, through love, to share the cares and sorrows of others. For if, on the contrary, one cultivates the opposite spirit of pride and self-sufficiency, he exercises a perverted moral judgment, and is self-deceived. Each man stands for himself, and not by comparison with others. Let him, therefore, test his own actions on their own merits, for each must bear his own burden of responsibility and accountability.

Love sympathizes and blesses (6 : 1-5)

18. *The Law of the Spiritual Harvest* (6 : 6-10)

Men must reap what they sow (6 : 6-10)

Those who receive Christian instruction should share with their teachers in the good things which God has given them. Do not deceive yourselves by thinking that you can shun this obligation of love ; God does not submit to the mockery attempted by those who think they may escape the just consequences of their actions ; he that lives and acts in accord with the natural, selfish impulses shall incur the consequence—a corrupted moral life ; while he who lives under the guidance of the Holy Spirit shall attain the goal of an incorruptible existence. Let this law of the spiritual harvest encourage us to right-doing, for our reward is secure ; let us, accordingly, faithfully discharge our obligations to all men, remembering those special duties which we owe to Christian brethren.

19. *The True Ground for Glorying* (6 : 11-18)

The perverse aims of the Judaizers (6 : 11-13)

Observe with what large characters I have written this epistle with my own hand. To sum up : Those who are constraining you to be circumcised are thereby but displaying their zeal for outward observances ; their aim is to escape those persecutions from the Jews which they would suffer if, like myself, they avowed their adherence solely to the doctrine of the cross. They are themselves inconsistent in observing the law, but they are anxious to have

you circumcised that they may make a great show of zeal for the Jewish religion by having won you Gentiles to its observance. But, as for me, I disclaim all grounds of glorying except the cross of Christ, by which I have broken off all relations to the sinful world as if by death. Since Christ's death is the true saving power, I am indifferent to the question of circumcision (in itself) and make newness of life through Christ my great concern. This truth (the importance of renewed life) supplies the rule and test of action and belief. Peace and mercy be upon all such (who will thereby prove themselves the true Israelites) as adopt and obey it! Let me not be troubled more by these errors and accusations, for the proof that I am Christ's is found in the scars upon my body which I have received in his service. May his grace be with you.

Christianity not an outward observance but an inward life (6 : 14-18)

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

I

THE CITY AND CHURCH OF CORINTH

The city of Corinth was a great centre of wealth, fashion, and amusement. Its people were mercurial and excitable. A lax morality was prevalent. All these conditions are clearly reflected in the epistles which Paul wrote to the Corinthian church. The party divisions, the fondness for ecstatic excitement at the religious meetings, the excesses at the love-feasts, the disputes before the heathen law-courts, and the toleration of social immorality within the church, all reflect the Corinthian character and illustrate the necessity that Paul should instruct the church in the elements of Christian truth and life. It was of the utmost importance that a strong and consistent Christian congregation should be built up in this great centre of trade and culture, and on no church did Paul lavish more labor and solicitude than on that at Corinth.

The Corinthian church was founded near the close of

Paul's second missionary journey (see Acts 18 : 1-17). At Corinth he had found a Jewish Christian couple, Aquila and Priscilla, who with their fellow-countrymen had been banished from Rome. They, like the apostle, were tent-makers, and with them he lived and labored. After an unsuccessful effort to win the Jews of Corinth to Christ, the apostle and his assistants, Silas and Timothy, turned to the Gentiles and began holding meetings in the house of a proselyte, Titus Justus. Through these efforts Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and his family, were converted. This was the beginning of a large ingathering, and for a year and a half Paul continued his work successfully. As on previous occasions, the Jews opposed his efforts and accused him before the proconsul, Gallio, of teaching contrary to the law. The Roman official very naturally replied that if it were a question of any wrong or wickedness concerning which they had appealed to him he would take cognizance of it, but that he would assume no jurisdiction in matters of Jewish religious belief and practice. He accordingly ruled them out of court. Thus were the Jewish opponents of the gospel once more thwarted in their designs.

Upon leaving Corinth the apostle again visited Jerusalem (Acts 18 : 22), from which he set out on his third missionary tour. It was during his long stay in Ephesus, which falls within this tour, that First Corinthians was written (Acts 19 : 10 ; 1 Cor. 16 : 19). On the commonly

received chronology of Paul's life the date would probably fall within the year A.D. 57.

II

THE PARTIES IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

The characteristics of the Corinthian people which we have noticed would easily lead them into strifes and divisions. Such troubles, as a matter of fact, arose. The apostle learned from the slaves of Chloe (1 Cor. 1 : 11), a Corinthian woman, that the church was divided into rival and contending factions. This party strife is the first theme that the apostle takes up in the epistle, and we may naturally suppose that it occupied the place of primary importance in his concern for the Corinthian church.

The question as to the origin and nature of these Corinthian parties is a difficult one. The apostle does not clearly define their peculiarities. It is probable that they were not very well defined in fact and that they were characterized more by personal preferences for various Christian teachers than by doctrinal differences. They were four in number: that of Paul, that of Apollos, that of Peter, and that of Christ (1 Cor. 1 : 12). From the description given in chapters 1 and 2 of a certain speculative interpretation and rhetorical presentation of the gospel it is probable that the Apollos party consisted of

those who had been captivated by the preaching of the eloquent Alexandrian, Apollos (compare Acts 18 : 24). There is no intimation, however, that they were characterized by any doctrinal peculiarity. The Pauline party would naturally include those who were zealous in their attachment to the person and teaching of the apostle himself, their first instructor in Christian truth. Allusions to a Judaizing spirit in the church and to a preference for the primitive apostles (*e.g.*, 9 : 1, 2) render it probable that the Peter party consisted of those who distrusted the authority of Paul and were disposed to regard Peter as a superior guide in Christian truth. The Second Epistle, as we shall see, reflects this tendency yet more clearly. Those who used the name of Christ as a party watchword may have been composed of those who had seen or known Christ in the flesh (see 2 Cor. 5 : 16). We have no means of distinguishing them sharply from the Petrine party. Not improbably, they were the most factious of all, pretending to go back of all apostolic authority. Many suppose that the party included the more extreme Judaizers to whom the apostle makes so many references in the second epistle (*e.g.*, 10 : 2, 8 ff.; 11 : 5, 6, 12, 13, 21, 22, etc.). In any case it is probable that the parties of Paul and Apollos were Gentile-Christian, and those of Peter and Christ Jewish-Christian in their sympathies and tendencies. Paul disapproves of them all alike because they are contrary to the true and essential unity of all be-

lievers in Christ. He reminds his readers that by their partisan preferences for one and another Christian teacher they are cutting themselves off from the common benefits in which all should share. "Wherefore," he adds, "let no one glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:21-23).

III

THE OCCASION, AIM, AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EPISTLE

The immediate occasion of the epistle seems to have been to rebuke and counteract the party spirit of which we have been speaking. But the apostle had another purpose also. From 5:9 it is evident that Paul had written a previous letter to the Corinthian Church, and from several passages (5:11; 7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:12) it appears that the church had replied and had requested further explanation and instruction on certain points. The topics on which the Corinthians question the apostle are: the personal relation of believers to wicked men in the surrounding heathen world, the relative advantages of marriage and celibacy, the eating by Christians of the

meat of animals offered in idol sacrifices and the use of spiritual gifts. To answer these questions was a second principal object of the letter. Incidentally also the apostle takes occasion to plead for a generous collection for the poor Christians at Jerusalem (16 : 1 ff.).

No epistle of Paul exceeds First Corinthians in interest. In variety of subject, in intensity of passion, and in eloquence of language it is unsurpassed. The practical topics which are discussed lead the apostle off into digressions and generalizations of the greatest interest; for example, his comparison of rhetorical and simple preaching occasions his description of true Christian wisdom in chapters 1 and 2, and his references to the right use of spiritual gifts leads him into the matchless eulogy of love in chapter 13. The epistle is concrete and practical; yet it contains some of Paul's most important doctrinal passages as, for example, that on the resurrection (15). It is a message of complaint and censure; yet there breathes through it a spirit of the greatest tenderness. The weak and erring believers with all their faults are still the apostle's "beloved children" (4 : 14). Perhaps no epistle of Paul so clearly reflects the condition of the church to which is is addressed; certainly none more clearly exhibits the great difficulty of developing a consistent Christian life in the atmosphere of the Greek morals of the period.

IV

THE FIRST MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS

1. *Salutation and Thanksgiving* (1 : 1-9)

Salutation (1 : 1-3)

I, Paul, an apostle of Christ by a divine call, and Sosthenes, my Christian brother, write to the church of Corinth, consecrated to God through faith in Christ, and to all who worship Jesus as Lord; grace and peace be with you.

Thanksgiving and commendation (1 : 4-9)

I praise God for your progress in Christian character and knowledge, by which you have attested the truth of the gospel which I preach to you. In no gift of grace are you surpassed by any other church. You are not dreading, but anticipating the coming of the Lord, who will keep you steadfast, and make you ready to welcome him at his advent. God, who has called you into the Christian life, will be true to you and will complete your salvation in his eternal kingdom.

2. *The Factions within the Church* (1 : 10 to 4 : 21)

Rumor of divisions (1 : 10-12)

Let me use our common relation to Christ as the basis for an exhortation to harmony and unity. For I have heard rumors of strifes and parties within your church. What I mean is that some are professing themselves to be followers of me; others are using in the same way the names of Apollos, Peter, and Christ.

What such partizanship Paul not in sympathy (1 : 13-17)

What! the name of Christ a party watchword! My name used by some as if I had died for them, and as if their baptism meant some special relation to me! If such a perversion of the import of baptism is possible, I am glad that I baptized so few of your number and so gave the less occasion for it. For, indeed, preaching, not baptizing, was my special, divinely appointed work—and preaching not of a rhetorical and speculative sort, but consisting in the proclamation of salvation through Christ's death.

Paul's plain manner of preaching Christ (1 : 18-25)

I know that this message of salvation through the death of Christ seems folly to wicked men; but to us Christians, who have experienced God's saving grace, it is full of divine meaning and efficacy. For, as the Old Testament says, God sets at naught the pretended wisdom of men. Self-sufficient sages and rhetoricians have no standing in the presence of the divine wisdom of which the cross is the symbol. Philosophy has long tried to find out God, and to disclose his will and requirements, and has failed, notwithstanding his display of his wisdom in his works. Hence God was pleased to reveal his saving purpose through the gospel of Christ. The Jews want miracles; the Greeks are devoted to philosophy; we proclaim salvation through the crucified Messiah—a doctrine equally offensive to Jew and to Greek. But the Christian, whether he be a Jew or a Greek, knows that Christ is the true miracle and the true wisdom. For what men in their

folly conceive to be wisdom and power bears no comparison with the divine wisdom and power of God as revealed in Christ.

The gospel appeals to the simple and the humble (1 : 26-31)

See the method of God in salvation, and observe to what class it appeals. Very few of those who are wise and powerful in the eyes of the world are drawn to the Christian gospel. The churches are composed of people of humble station and limited education. But in them God will vindicate his method. He will show how the true divine power and wisdom will triumph over those of which the world boasts. You Corinthian Christians are examples of what I say. God has brought you into fellowship with Christ, who has become to you the power that cleanses and saves. You verify the Scriptural word ; Let him that boasts of his privileges and advantages ascribe them, not to himself, but to God.

The one theme of Paul's preaching (2 : 1-5)

When I preached to you I did not present the gospel in a rhetorical or speculative form. I purposed to display no knowledge to you but that of Jesus Christ and of his saving death. My intercourse with you was accompanied by great anxiety and depression. My message was not made effective by rhetorical artifices, but by the working of the divine Spirit, so that your faith might have, not a human, but a divine foundation.

But although I thus disclaim dependence upon mere human skill in thought and speech, we Christians have a divine philosophy which we teach to those who are

The deep heavenly wisdom of the preaching of the cross (2 : 6-16)

mature enough to receive it. It is widely different from the false, earthly wisdom of those who are now in high places, but whose reign will be short. It is a deep, divine secret which God has long kept in his own purpose. The mighty ones of earth do not know it; if they had known it, they would not have crucified Jesus. It is a philosophy which may be described in the Old Testament words which speak of gifts of God which surpass the power of the senses and the capacity of the mind to imagine and know. This philosophy speaks of a revelation to the heart of man, by the divine Spirit, of things which wholly surpass human knowledge. What man can know another as he knows himself? Who can know the deeps of God's nature and ways as the Holy Spirit knows them? Now in accepting the gospel we have become the recipients, not of the false wisdom of the world, but of the heavenly wisdom which the divine Spirit teaches, and which enables us to appreciate God's highest gifts. It is this spiritual wisdom which we teach, not in terms adapted to the communication of the false wisdom, but in those adapted to the teaching of the true, thus fitting the method of instruction to the nature of the truth to be taught. Now the irreligious man does not discern the meaning of this higher wisdom; it requires for its appreciation a capacity for spiritual insight which he does not possess. The spiritually minded man can rightly estimate all things, while he himself is above the judgment of those who have

not this spiritual organ of vision. No one, indeed, can instruct Christ; but we Christians have a knowledge of his thought and will; therefore, as spiritually minded men, we have an experience of divine truth which no one can gainsay.

The spiritual immaturity of the Corinthians as shown in their divisions (3 : 1-9)

When I preached to you I was obliged to treat you, not as mature men, but as spiritual children. I taught you only the rudiments of the heavenly wisdom; you were not able to receive anything beyond these, and you have not yet grown mature enough in the Christian life to be able to do so. Sufficient proof of this inability is found in the selfish divisions which exist in your church. Are you not acting like unconverted men in making the names of your teachers symbols of alienation and schism? Who are these teachers? Merely agents whom God has employed to bring to you the message of salvation. Each did his work according to the gift of grace which he possessed. We teachers may be likened to those who cultivate a field; one plants the seed, another irrigates the soil: but it is God alone who can make the seed grow. The laborers are but his instruments, and have no power, of themselves, to produce a harvest. Besides, all the work of the different laborers has the same end, and each will be held responsible for doing his own part well. I say we are one, for we are all laborers whom God has employed to co-operate with him in carrying out his divine plan. You Corinthians are like a tilled field on which

we have expended our labors—like a building to whose construction we have contributed.

The true basis of their church life (3 : 10-15)

In regard to my own personal service in the upbuilding of your church, I remind you that I was its founder. I taught you to know Christ. Whoever comes after and seeks to serve you, let him see to it that he builds nothing incongruous with the foundation, which is Christ. There can be no other basis for your church than faith in Christ as Saviour. Other teachers may come, and, as it were, build into the superstructure of your church various materials, some perishable, some permanent. The day of the Lord's coming will disclose what is abiding and what is transient. That day will test the work of these various teachers as fire tests the materials of a building. If any teacher has contributed something lasting to your church life, he shall be rewarded. But if any teacher's work has not really advanced your Christian growth, it will go for nothing. The faith shown in the good intention of the teacher will save him, but not his work. In the judgment he will be like one who should barely escape the flames which consume a building which he has built.

To ruin the church is sacrilege (3 : 16, 17)

Do you not know that your church is a sacred spiritual building consecrated to God, inhabited by his Spirit? To ruin such a structure is sacrilege, and will be punished with spiritual destruction.

Beware of self-deception. Do not confound earthly and heavenly wisdom. Each is folly the view of the

other. Renounce the self-sufficient folly of the world that you may become truly wise. For such vanity and conceit are folly in the eyes of God, as the Scripture says. Away, then, with this proud and selfish boasting through preference for one and another Christian teacher! For you all have a right, not merely to what you derive from your favorite teacher, but to what you may derive from them all. Yes, more; the Christian's possession is boundless; Christ unlocks to you the world's treasures, clothes life with meaning, robs death of its terrors, fills the present with victory and the future with hope. Such is your privilege; only remember that all this will prove true in your case only on condition that you belong to Christ as he belongs to God.

The folly of division and rivalry (3 : 18-23)

Your proper attitude toward us teachers should be determined by what we are—servants who handle possessions not our own. It is the part of subordinates such as we are to render allegiance to our Master. Faithfulness to him is the test to be applied to us. It is a matter of small concern to me what estimate with reference to the fulfilment of my office you or other men may place upon me. Of just as little consequence would be my own estimate of myself. For, though I am not conscious of any unfaithfulness to my stewardship, yet the approval of my own conscience and self-judgment is not a just ground of complacency; it is Christ who is my judge. Cease, then, from passing these comparative

Christian teachers are but servants of Christ (4 : 1-5)

judgments on your teachers. Whatever praise we each deserve we shall receive at the Lord's coming, when the deserts of men, which are now hidden, shall be fully made known.

Your partizanship fosters conceit and supercilious-ness (4 : 6-13).

Now I have meant these principles to apply to your attitude toward myself and Apollos, that you may avoid conduct contrary to the Scriptures, and the pride and partisanship connected with preferences for individual teachers. If some of you possess any gift of superiority over others it is God who has bestowed the advantage; what you have you have received from him, and cannot boast of its possession, as if it had originated with yourselves. But in your conceit you think you have everything; you act as if you had already entered upon the full enjoyment of Christ's kingdom, and that quite independently of us; would that you had entered upon it in reality, and that we might share it with you! For we apostles are very far from the exaltation which you fancy yourselves to have attained. Our hardships and perils make us a gazing-stock, a subject of wonder to angels and men. In the estimation of such wise and sagacious Christians as you are, we have no standing at all in virtue or influence. Our poverty, sufferings, homelessness, and toil; our patient endurance under insult and persecution; the contempt and obloquy which we have experienced, seem to count for nothing with you.

I am writing in this severe way for your own good. I

am your spiritual father. Though you may have many other teachers, I shall always be the one who brought you to Christ. As such, I beg you to adopt my doctrine and practice of humility and self-denial. And that you may do this, I have sent to you my trusted pupil Timothy to teach you the meaning and requirements of these principles. Some among you who are hostile to me boast that I dare not come to Corinth myself, but they will find that I will come, and that very soon, if the Lord permits, and then I will put these boasters to the test and see whether the results of their work correspond with their great pretensions. For that is the true test. The kingdom of God, which both they and we profess to promote, does not consist in boastful claims, but in the divine power which produces a new life. In what temper I shall be when I come will depend upon you. If your pride and division continue, I shall be severe, but if you forsake your evil courses, you will find me gentle and indulgent.

The spirit of humility would be more fitting (4 : 14-21).

3. *The Case of the Fornicator* (5)

Another rumor which I have heard concerning you is that unchastity is common among you; and, indeed, that there is a case of incest in your church which not even the immoral heathen would tolerate, that of a church member living as if in marriage with his own step-mother. Instead of being grieved at this, and proceeding to exclude the offender, you are as proud and self-satisfied as ever.

Gross immorality of church members should be firmly disciplined (5 : 1-5)

He ought to have been removed, for, though personally absent, yet as being present with you in interest and sympathy, I have passed this verdict of exclusion. Consider me, then, as if present among you, and with your co-operation as pronouncing, in the name of Christ, the judgment of excommunication on this man, and remanding him to Satan, that he may inflict upon him sufferings which will break the power of his sinful lusts, so that he may be led to repentance and recovery, and thus be saved at last at Christ's coming. Instead of boasting, you ought to be purifying your church of such evils. However limited, they will rapidly spread, like leaven in meal. Remove this evil, as the Israelites were required to remove leaven from their houses before the paschal feast. For Christ, the antitypical passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us, and we Christians are to keep a feast which celebrates deliverance from sin. We must allow no defiling element to mingle in our festival, but celebrate it in simplicity and purity.

That the church may be pure (5 : 6–8)

In a previous letter I warned you not to associate with men like the one just mentioned; but I did not mean that you must have no relations, in the world at large, with such men, or with greedy and grasping men, or with idol worshippers; it would be wholly impossible, as you suggest, to avoid all association with such men. What I meant to say—and I now repeat it—was that if a professing Christian is guilty of such sins, you should withdraw

A persistently sinful Christian must be disfellowshipped (5 : 9-13)

from all fellowship with him. I cannot undertake to regulate the action of the outside world in such matters. I am concerned to keep the church without reproach, and this is equally your own duty and prerogative. Our discipline cannot extend to those outside the church. These are amenable to God's final judgment alone. But I have said enough. Excommunicate this man!

4. *Going to Law Before Heathen Courts* (6 : 1–11)

When differences arise among you, do not take them before the heathen law-courts, but settle them among yourselves by arbitration. It surely cannot be that those who are to participate with Christ in judging the world are incompetent to settle the most trivial disputes. Surely, if angels are to be amenable to the judgment in which Christians are to participate, the settlement of affairs pertaining to this life may safely be left in their hands. When, therefore, cases of controversy arise in your church, do not refer them to the heathen judges, who have no standing in the estimate of Christians; to do so would be disgraceful. It must be that there is some one in your church who is competent to settle such disputes; you do not need to resort to the heathen courts. Indeed, you are seriously at fault in having such disputes at all. They cause more evil than they avert. Under the pretext of defending your rights you do injury and injustice to your

Disputes should be settled within the church, not taken before the heathen law-courts (6 : 1-11)

Christian brethren. Let me sum the matter up by reminding you of the nature of the kingdom of God. Its primary demand is righteousness. Wicked men cannot enter it. Before your conversion you were very wicked. Remember what your Christian profession means: purity, consecration to God, salvation through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

5. *The Limits of Christian Liberty* (6 : 12-20)

Christian liberty does not mean liberty to sin (6 : 12-20)

With respect to the principle of personal liberty, I maintain it—with qualifications. One qualification is, that many things which are in themselves permissible are not wise; another, that one should not enslave himself to any course of action, even if it is, in itself, allowable. Apply this principle to the question of liberty in respect to the eating of various kinds of food. With respect to the relation of food to the body, it is simply a question of adaptation. Both belong to a perishable order. Within this sphere one may freely use his liberty. But the relation of unchastity to the body is different. That relation is moral, and to give the body over to uncleanness is not within the province of an allowable liberty. The body of the Christian man is sacred because of his relation to Christ, and is to share in the blessedness of redemption. In the mystical union of the believer with Christ the body is included. How utterly inconsistent is this union with that which is established in social immorality. For, as the Old Tes-

tament says, the marital union makes the persons so united "one flesh." And equally does Christian faith mean spiritual union with Christ. Now these two unions are wholly incompatible. Therefore avoid unchastity, which, above all sins, defiles the body. This sin is pre-eminently a sin against the body. Now the body of the Christian is sacred to God, and he has no right to defile it. You have been consecrated to God through Christ's death; therefore you are bound to honor him to whom you belong by a pure life.

6. *The Question of Marriage* (7)

Paul's preference for the unmarried state (7 : 1-7)

Now with regard to the questions which you have asked concerning the advisability of marriage, I recommend the choice of the single state. However, marriage is, no doubt, a relative good, for it has a certain restraining power, and averts many temptations. Let both husband and wife fulfil their mutual obligations. Do not incur the risks of separation, unless it be by mutual agreement for a time, in order that you may give yourselves more entirely to religious devotion. Now this advice I give not by explicit commandment from the Lord on the subject, but by way of allowance for the conditions of the time. But, in general, I prefer that people should remain unmarried. Yet marriage and celibacy are equally gifts from God in which purity may be preserved.

I repeat the expression of my preference for the un-

The advice given does not warrant needless separation (7 : 8-17)

married state, but in cases where self-control might be endangered by following this advice, I recommend marriage. But this preference, which, in the present condition, I express for celibacy, is not to be construed as indorsing separation of the married—not even in cases of intermarriage between Christians and heathen. Jesus spoke plainly against divorce. If, therefore, partners have separated, let them either refrain from contracting new marriages or become reunited. But a further question arises: What shall those couples do who were married before one of the parties became a Christian? Jesus gave no instruction respecting such cases, but I give this judgment: If such couples can peacefully dwell together, let them by all means do so. For in such cases the unbelieving partner and the children of the union are brought within the sanctifying influence of a Christian life. But what if the heathen partner refuses to live with the Christian? Then the latter must acquiesce in the separation, for the effort to perpetuate the union would only lead to strife. But someone may reply that if the Christian insists upon continuing the union, it may be a means of saving the one who is not a Christian. I reply that this result is by no means certain. The more obvious advantages of separation in such cases outweigh this remote possibility. I have said that in such cases the Christian is not bound to try to perpetuate the union, but this liberty, in turn, should be regulated by the principle that

the relations in which one finds himself should not be lightly esteemed and readily broken up. This maxim I everywhere insist upon. If a Jew becomes a Christian, let him be content to be a Christian Jew. Not nationality, but obedience to God, determines Christian character. Christianity does not purpose to break up national and social distinctions. If a slave is converted, let it not trouble him that he is a slave; let him use his position as a slave in a Christian way, and not seek to become free on the ground that he has become a Christian. For in Christ social distinctions disappear in a higher unity. The Christian slave is Christ's free man, and the Christian free man is Christ's slave. You all belong to one master; your relation to him transcends all other relations. Let each be content in his providential station.

The natural relations not to be changed (7 : 18–24)

Respecting the question which you raise as to parents giving their daughters in marriage, I have no word of Christ on the subject to which I can appeal, but as one whom God has graciously enlightened and guided, I give my opinion. I think that in view of the impending calamities which will precede the Lord's advent it is wise for them to remain unmarried. In relation to marriage, let each remain in the state in which he is. I do not claim divine authority for this advice. A person who disregards it does not thereby commit a sin. But I warn you that those who disregard it will reap the consequences in added suffering, and this is what I should like to ward off

Reasons for the apostle's preference in view of the Lord's coming (7 : 25-31)

from you by my present advice. The Lord's coming is near, and very soon it will make no difference what one's outward relations or conditions are, since the present order is soon to cease. My concern for you is that you be free to give yourselves unreservedly to the Lord's service. This the unmarried can do more easily than the one who is encumbered by the cares of married life. Here the virgin has an advantage as compared with the married woman. The former may devote herself wholly to religious life, while the latter is likely to concern herself with cares which distract her from this purpose. I do not wish to put needless restrictions upon you, but to give you such advice as shall promote your devotion to Christ and his service. But if now, after all I have said, a parent or guardian thinks that in withholding his daughter or ward from marriage, after she has reached a marriageable age, he would be doing her a wrong, or exposing her to temptation, let him exercise his liberty and give her in marriage; he does not sin in so doing. But where no such conditions as I have supposed exist, it will be wise to follow my advice. In the former case no sin is committed; in the latter, the preferable course is followed. The marriage bond is broken by death. After the death of the husband, the wife may marry, but she must marry a Christian. But I repeat my opinion that she will be wiser if she remain unmarried; and I think that on this subject I am rightly interpreting the divine will.

The greater freedom for service of the unmarried (7 : 32–40)

7. *The Proper Attitude toward Sacrificial Meat* (8)

Now in regard to the question of eating the meat of animals killed in idolatrous sacrifices, we enlightened Christians know that such meat cannot defile us. But in the Christian life love, and not mere knowledge, is the safest guide. The man who determines to act solely according to what is theoretically allowable has not yet learned the Christian way; for when a man loves God then a relation of fellowship and likeness between man and God is constituted. Now, as bearing on this question, we Christians know that idols have no real power to defile meat, and that there is but one true God. For although in the heathen religions there are numerous so-called divinities, yet in our belief there is only one God, the source and end of all things; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, the agent of creation and redemption. But not all possess this knowledge. Many uninstructed Christians who have been brought up to think of heathen divinities as having real power, cannot rid themselves of the idea that meat which has been in connection with a heathen sacrifice is defiled and ought not to be eaten by a Christian. But our acceptableness to God does not depend upon such matters. The question of eating it, or not eating it, is, in itself, morally indifferent. But while you are thus free to follow either course, you should consider how your action in so doing will affect others, and regu-

Love, not knowledge, the guide of life (8 : 1-3)

Knowledge must be regulated by love (8 : 4-8)

The strong must remember the weak (8 : 9–13)

late the use of your liberty by regard for their good. To illustrate: If a person who has scruples as to his right to partake of such meat as we have spoken of, sees you, a fellow-Christian, who have no such scruples, partaking of an idolatrous sacrificial feast, will he not be encouraged by your example to do what he is not clear in his conscience that he has the right to do? This is what I mean by a use of knowledge which is not regulated by love. You may so use your liberty, in itself allowable, as to make it a means of moral destruction to the weak Christian. If you do thus proceed in a reckless disregard of the weakness and ignorance of others, you do them a great moral injury and violate the law of Christ. So that if the exercise of my liberty to eat of sacrificial meat is likely to have such an evil effect upon others, I will utterly forego its use.

8. *Paul's Own Example of Self-Denial* (9)

His right to support as an apostle (9 : 1–12)

In regard to freedom and self-denial, I have practised the principle which I now commend to you. My apostolic office, my relation to Christ, and my work in converting you to Christ would seem to involve some rights and claims. For whoever else may doubt or deny these, you Corinthians, my converts, certainly will not do so. When the validity of my apostleship is called in question, your conversion by me is my effectual answer. Have I not, then, a right to support at the hands of the church which

I have founded? Have I not a right to marry a believing wife and to take her with me on my apostolic journeys, as other Christian workers have done? On what ground can it be claimed that Barnabas and I are the only Christian teachers who have no right to be supported by those for whom we labor? Do soldiers support themselves? Do planters and shepherds refrain from sharing the product of their vineyards or herds? Does someone answer that I am pleading a principle of mere human prudence? Does not the Scripture contain our principle? When the law forbids the putting of a muzzle on the ox when threshing, does the maxim relate to mere brutes? In giving this law God is not concerning himself for them, but is giving a principle which is applicable to us Christian teachers in order to encourage us in our work with the prospect of a just reward for our labor. Now if we bestowed upon you spiritual benefits, the greater good, is it unreasonable that we should receive from you our material support, the lesser good? No one else ever did for you what I and my helpers have done. If anyone possesses the right to support from you, surely we do; but we have freely renounced all our claims and have willingly endured hardships and privations, in order that we might not give to anyone a ground of criticism or complaint against us and thus embarrass our work. The priests, indeed, have a portion of the animals offered in sacrifice for their own needs. And Jesus taught that the laborer in his service

His reason for refusing to accept support (9 : 13–18)

is entitled to his food. I have freely relinquished my rights in this matter, and I am not defending them now in order to claim them, for I would rather die than forego the joy of preaching the gospel without asking anything in return. In relinquishing my right to support from my converts, I have, indeed, a ground of boasting, for I do that on my own accord; but in the matter of preaching the gospel there is no such ground, for I am not doing that of my own independent volition, but in consequence of a divine call. That I must do; I should be guilty of disobedience to God if I did not. For one may speak of reward, a claim to some special credit, in cases where, as in the matter of support, one renounces a right which he is at perfect liberty to enjoy; but when, as in the matter of my preaching, my duty is divinely imposed, I am acting subject to the will of another, and it is a question not of personal liberty to choose either of two courses, but only of faithfulness to the divine command. Now if in this matter of my self-denial I speak of reward, in what does the reward consist? I find it in making the gospel free and in being able to ask nothing in return for preaching it. So far from doing what I had the abstract right to do, I have made every possible concession wherever I saw a possibility of winning men to Christ. I have accommodated myself to Jewish prejudices, that I might win the Jews; I have been careful to lay no needless burdens upon the heathen. In all cases I have

His readiness to sacrifice himself for the sake of others (9 : 19–22)

made the law of Christ the necessary and essential thing, and have aimed to win both classes to its acceptance. I have made concessions to the scrupulous for the sake of their salvation; in fact, I have made it my principle to do everything possible to adapt myself to the needs, prejudices, and weaknesses of all classes of men, in the hope that I might lead some of them to Christ. And through this consecration to Christ's work I hope myself to become a partaker in the final salvation. In the Greek athletic games there is something to be won. All the contestants strive for it, but only one receives it. This fact imparts eagerness and zeal to the contest. Let a similar zeal animate the runner in the Christian race. Again, the athlete who will win must be trained and disciplined. If men will practise rigid self-control as a means to winning a mere earthly prize, how much more should we practise self-discipline as a means to winning the heavenly reward? I am trying so to run with the confident assurance of success; I am waging the conflict as the boxer does when he does not uselessly strike into the air, but vanquishes his opponent. I am subjecting my body to severe discipline, lest I fail in my effort to win men and so prove myself an unacceptable servant of Christ.

His supreme aim (9 : 23–27)

9. *Christian Freedom Not to be Abused* (10 : 1 to 11 : 1)

Let me enforce my exhortation to faithfulness and zeal by lessons from our Jewish history. Our fathers passed

The Israelites an example of the danger of over-confidence (10: 1-14)

safely through the Red Sea under the protection of Jehovah. In this experience they entered into special relation to Moses as their divinely appointed leader. They enjoyed the divine provision for their spiritual needs, for Christ was invisibly present with them. But in spite of all these blessings, most of them were disobedient to God and incurred his displeasure, in consequence of which they perished on the journey. Now these events illustrate the danger of disobedience and sinful desire. Do you, then, beware of idol worship with the frivolity and revelry which accompany it. Avoid with equal care social impurity, such as some of them were guilty of, and in consequence of which large numbers of them suddenly died. And let us not presume upon God's mercy, as they did, and thereby miserably perished; nor complain against God, as they did, and died by a plague. Now these events contain lessons for us; they are applicable to our case, who live in the closing age of the world. Give heed to the warning and remember that your moral trial is not too great to be borne, and that God will give you strength and victory. The conclusion of all is: Avoid idol worship.

Christianity and idol-worship have nothing in common (10: 15-22)

Let me now apply this warning; You shall see if the application is not just. Do not the wine and the bread in the Lord's supper symbolize fellowship with Christ? And does not this common fellowship with Christ make all believers one, even as the source of their spiritual

life is one? Look at the outward, typical Israel. Did not participation in the sacrifices make them sharers in the truths and blessings for which the altar stood? I do not mean to imply in this illustration that heathen sacrificial feasts have any such realities corresponding to them as the Jewish sacrifices have. There are no beings corresponding to the heathen's conception of their divinities. The demons correspond more closely to those conceptions than any other beings. Really, idol worship is demon worship, and Christians must have no fellowship with demons. You cannot be in fellowship with Christ and in fellowship with demons at the same time. Or, if we think that we can unite things so diverse, are we prepared to challenge the Lord's anger? Could we escape the consequences of his displeasure?

Christian liberty is limited by expediency and love (10 : 23 to 11 : 1).

Returning now to the question as to the limits of Christian liberty, I repeat that the Christian has the abstract right to do whatever is not in itself sinful; but considerations of Christian wisdom and expediency sometimes put practical limits upon that freedom. Some things, in themselves allowable, are not adapted to the building up of Christian character, and the Christian is not to regard his own interest alone, but also that of others. Respecting the perplexing question of eating sacrificial meat I would give the following advice: In the purchase and use of meat raise no questions and indulge no scruples as to whether it is sacrificial meat or not, for all that the Lord

has made is good. But if some one else has scruples the case may be altered. Suppose, for example, that you are invited to a dinner at the house of an unbeliever and you wish to go. Do so freely, and eat what is provided without raising any question, on grounds of conscience, respecting the meat. But if someone points out to you the fact that the meat offered is sacrificial and evinces scruples as to his right to eat it, then refrain from eating it yourself for the sake of conscience; not, indeed, for the sake of your own conscience, but for the sake of the conscience of the other man, who would be misled and injured by your eating. Such action would have its sufficient reason in the weakness of the scrupulous man, for, in itself considered, one's liberty is not determined by someone else's conscience, but by his own. I say, then, that it is wholly on the other man's account, and not on my own, that I should refrain from eating in such a case, for if I can eat with genuine thanksgiving to God, why should anyone impute sin to me in so doing? Let us do all things, including eating and drinking, in such a way as to honor God in the doing of them. Beware of creating moral hindrances for anyone. Adopt my principle of renouncing personal advantages and rights, and let your motto be, the salvation of the greatest possible number. Follow this rule of self-renunciation which I have adopted, for I derived it from Christ himself.

10. *Proper Conduct in the Church Assemblies* (11 : 2-34)

I praise you for the deference which you show to me and to my teachings. But there is one point of propriety on which I wish to correct your practice. God has established an order of dependence. Every man is dependent upon Christ, and in like manner is woman, in the order of nature, dependent upon man, as Christ is dependent upon God. Now it agrees with this natural headship of man, on the one hand, and the natural dependence of woman, on the other, that in a public assembly the men should appear with unveiled, and the women with veiled, heads. If the man wears the symbol of dependence, he offends against the order of nature, and if the woman prays or speaks in public without this symbol, it is as disgraceful as for her to have her hair cut short. I therefore say that a woman might just as well have her long hair cut off as to appear thus in the public assembly without the veil. Man should not wear the badge of dependence, since as God's first creation, according to Genesis, he is the direct reflection of God's glory ; whereas woman, as an indirect and mediate creation of God, has a secondary position and should wear the mark of her dependence upon man. For man was not made from woman and for woman, but woman was made from man and for man ; therefore ought she to wear the veil, the sign of man's authority over her—the more so since

The women should have their heads veiled. (11 : 2-15).

the angels are looking down upon your assembly, noting your behavior. But there is also a sense in which man and woman are mutually dependent. For as, at the beginning, woman was created from man, so subsequently, man is born of woman, and both alike in all their relations and functions are dependent upon God. I leave it to your own sense of propriety whether it is seemly for a woman to pray in public with unveiled head. Does not a natural sense of what is fitting clearly show the impropriety of a man's letting his hair grow long; and, with equal clearness, the propriety that woman should wear her hair long, since nature has thus provided her with a kind of natural veil?

At the love-feasts there should be no contention or excess (11 : 16-22).

Now if anyone cares more for his own personal and selfish will than he does for the common good, let me say to him that the interests of the churches are inconsistent with any such habit of mind. I am constrained to rebuke your spirit of contention, because it makes your meeting together in the church more of a hindrance than a help to your Christian life. For, to begin with, I hear that your church is badly divided, and I must think that the report is in a large degree true. Such factions are the unavoidable means whereby the genuine Christian life is tested and shown. But with your present habits it is impossible for your church properly to celebrate the Lord's supper. You make the occasion a scene of contention and revelry, for, instead of waiting till all may be supplied, each one

eats and drinks what he has brought, and the result is that those who have made no contribution to the feast receive nothing, while others drink to excess. If the object is simply to eat and drink, why do you not do so at home? Or, have you no reverence for the assembly and no consideration for the poor who are thus left unsupplied? I cannot but condemn such behavior. How incongruous it is will be evident when I recall to you the origin of the Holy Supper. It has been handed down to me from Christ himself how on the solemn night of his betrayal he took bread and wine and instituted this sacred rite, telling his disciples that it was a memorial of him and a token of his suffering and death on their behalf, and that they should observe it as such till his advent. Now by such shameful conduct as I have described you profane Christ and his saving death. Let every one test himself by considering whether he is partaking of the supper with a fitting sense of its sacredness. For one's participation in it is self-condemned if he partakes of the feast with no sense of the saving significance of Christ's death. The prevalent sickness among you, and the death of some of your number, is a punishment upon such irreverence. If, in this matter, we exercised self-judgment, we should not incur the divine judgment. But when we do thus incur sickness or suffering for our sins, it is the Lord's discipline whereby he is seeking to lead us to repentance and salvation. The conclusion is: When you meet to observe the

The incongruity of such conduct evident (11 : 23–27)

The observance of the rite a sacred and significant act (11 : 28–34)

Lord's supper, avoid all unseemly greed and haste; wait till others can be served. Do not make the sacred feast a mere occasion for satisfying hunger; to do so is a wicked perversion of its purpose. As to other matters of order, I will regulate them when I visit you.

11. *The Right Use of Spiritual Gifts* (12 : 1 to 14 : 40)

The primary test of all gifts (12 : 1-3)

Now with respect to spiritual endowments concerning which you have asked, I would remind you, in the first place, that, as converts from heathen superstition, you need instruction and guidance. The very first thing to be understood is that the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord is the key-note of all inspired speech. The primary test of the Spirit's inspiration is: Do you acknowledge the Lordship of Christ?

Their unity (12 : 4-11)

Another point to be noted is that the gifts in question, no matter how various they may be, have one source. It is God who by his Spirit bestows them all. A further test to be applied to these endowments is that of utility. Now all these diverse gifts of speech and of action have one source—the divine Spirit, who apportions them to the different members of the community.

The variety and relative value of the gifts (12 : 12-31)

The unity of those who possess the various gifts is analogous to the unity of the body; they are all one in Christ. Their baptism into Christ signifies their unity in him, whatever their nationality or social condition. Ap-

ply the analogy of the body; no member can refuse to be a part of the body, because it is not some other member. What kind of a body would that be which consisted of only one part or member? As a matter of fact, God has constituted the body out of various members, each with its special function. Otherwise, there would be no real body at all, but now, in fact, many members compose the one body. That being so, no one member can dispense with any other, not even in the case of the weaker parts of the body; for these, too, are necessary to the completeness of the body: nor in the case of the less honored members, upon which, however, we bestow an honor peculiar to themselves, thereby offsetting the special honor which nature has bestowed upon some parts of the body. Thus God has given unity and harmony to the body by assigning to each part its own place and use, so that the good of one is the good of all. Now apply the analogy to the church, the mystical body of Christ. Each Christian is a member of Christ and has his own function to fulfil. There are the various offices and gifts, greater and lesser. Estimate them according to their relative value and usefulness, and I will now tell you what is the principle by which they are to be tested and measured; it is love.

All gifts valueless without love (13 : 1–13).

If love does not inspire and direct the use of the gift of tongues, its expression, however ecstatic, is mere meaningless and valueless sound. The ability to interpret di-

vine truth, the knowledge of divine mysteries in their entire number and compass, the most heroic trust in God's power, would have no value without love. The noblest gifts of generosity, the greatest deeds of self-sacrifice, are morally worthless if love is not their motive. Love is patient under provocation, is not jealous of others' good fortune, is not vainglorious or proud, is averse to unseemly contentions, is unselfish, does not yield to anger or hate, nor harbor revenge; glories not in the triumphs of wrong, but in the triumphs of righteousness; endures, trusts, expects, and perseveres without limit. Love is an imperishable virtue; the gifts of prophecy, of tongues, and of knowledge serve a temporary purpose and shall pass away. For these gifts are all partial, and the partial must give place to the perfect principle, the sum of all goodness. Our future perfection in love will be as much greater than our present spiritual endowments and attainments as the speech and thought of mature manhood are superior to those of childhood. For how imperfect is our present apprehension of divine things! Our present knowledge of them is only indirect and indistinct; but in the future life it will be direct and immediate; now it is partial, but then shall I plainly know spiritual things with a knowledge like that of God. To sum the matter up: In contrast to the temporary gifts, there are three enduring virtues, faith, hope, and love, but the most fundamental and comprehensive of these is love.

The gifts of prophecy and of tongues compared (14 : 1-19)

Cultivate love, which is the regulative principle of all the gifts, yet not in such a way as to neglect the latter, of which prophecy is especially useful. Prophecy, I say, is preferable, because the ecstatic speaking with tongues is unintelligible and does not edify the hearers. The prophetic exposition of truth, on the contrary, is helpful and instructive to those who hear it. Prophecy, as compared with tongues, ministers more to the general good of the believing community. The former is, therefore, the preferable gift, because it is more useful, unless the ecstatic speaking be interpreted. What would be the profit of my speaking to you in ecstasy, unless I accompany such speech with some clear communication of truth? To do so would be as useless as it would be to make confused and meaningless sounds, when a trumpet-call to battle is needed. In like manner our religious utterance will be to no purpose if it is not clear and intelligible. Each language has, no doubt, a meaning of its own, but if one does not know the language which is spoken to him, no idea is conveyed. Let the practical tests of utility and helpfulness be applied in your cultivation of all spiritual endowments. Let the speaker in tongues seek the gift of interpretation, for in ecstatic prayer there is no clear idea corresponding to the feeling expressed. I will therefore so engage in prayer and praise that there shall be not merely an energy of devout feeling, but of thought as well. For if prayer is only fervent and excited without being intelligible, how can

one who is unaccustomed to such utterance make it his own? In such a case the worship is, no doubt, sincere, but it is unprofitable to the hearers. I yield to none in my mastery of this gift, but I insist that the fewest words of intelligible speech are more useful in the public assembly than any amount of mere ecstatic utterance.

Limited value of the gift of tongues (14 : 20-25)

You must cultivate the power of distinguishing the useful from the useless; it is only with respect to evil that you are to be as innocent as children. As the prophet warned Judah of an invasion by the Assyrians, so now God is warning unbelievers by means of the strange language of this gift of tongues—a gift which serves to point out unbelievers and to evoke expressions of their contempt for the church, whereas prophecy tends to evoke faith and to call out its expression. In illustration, suppose the whole congregation to be assembled and all to be engaged in ecstatic speech. Suppose there comes in a person who is unfamiliar with such an exercise, or who is prejudiced against your religion. What will be the effect upon him? Will not his opposition and contempt be strengthened and expressed? But, on the contrary, suppose all to be occupied in prophesying. How different the impression and effect! The truth clearly and strikingly uttered finds his heart, discloses his need, and overpowers his unbelief, so that he bows in penitence and confession.

What, then, is the conclusion to be drawn from the fact that the gift of tongues is attended with all these disad-

vantages? It is that each should exercise his peculiar gift without exaggeration or extravagance and with a view to edification. Let edification, I repeat, be the test of all such exercises. On any given occasion let there not be more than two or three speakers in tongues; let these speak, not at once, but successively, and let what they say be explained to the congregation. If no interpreter is at hand, let the ecstatic speaking be a silent exercise between the speaker and God. Let the same rule as to the number of speakers apply to the prophets, and let those who listen judge whether what is said proceeds from the Spirit of God or not. If while one prophet is speaking, some truth is disclosed to another who is sitting and listening, let the one who is speaking stop and let the other speak. For by thus giving way to one another all the prophets can speak in turn, so that all the members of the church may be benefited by the utterance of each. And the truly inspired prophet will be self-restrained and self-controlled, for God's inspiration does not lead to disorder and excess, but to quietness and harmony. This principle I everywhere insist upon.

Utility the supreme test of spiritual gifts (14 : 26-33)

The women of your church are not to speak in the public assembly, but to be under the law of dependence, as the Old Testament requires. They are not even to ask questions in public; if they wish instruction, let each ask her own husband at home, for it is grossly improper for women to take part in the public meetings of the congre-

Behavior of women in the assembly (14 : 34-36)

gation. Or, as against these instructions, will you assume that you were the originators and sole possessors of Christianity and have a right to determine its demands?

Importance of the instruction concerning the use of the gifts (14 : 37, 38)

Once more, with respect to the use of the spiritual gifts —let each man who prides himself on possessing such a gift recognize in the regulations which I have given concerning them a divine commandment. But if anyone from vanity and rivalry wilfully ignores my instruction, let him know that God ignores him.

Two final words (14 : 39, 40)

My conclusion is: The gift of tongues need not be disused, but the gift of prophecy is more helpful; but, in any case, the rule is: A seemly and orderly use of all gifts.

12. *The Proofs and Meaning of the Resurrection* (15)

The grounds of belief in Christ's resurrection (15 : 1-11)

Let me remind you of the nature and basis of the gospel which I taught you and on which—if it is a valid gospel—your salvation is based. Chief among the facts which I derived from the tradition of Christ's deeds were these: his death on behalf of our sins in fulfilment of prophecy; his burial; his resurrection on the third day in agreement with Scripture; his manifestation of himself to various disciples, some of whom have died, but the majority of whom are still living; then, his appearance to various apostles, and, finally, his appearance on the road to Damascus to me, who am utterly unworthy of such a favor from heaven. For when I think of my persecution of the

church I feel unworthy the name of an apostle of Christ. Yet, through the favor of God, I am such, and by his divine aid I have been able to prove myself such, and to outdo in toil and suffering all the other apostles; yet I take no personal credit for this, for it was God who girded me for my work. But no matter who did the work of setting the gospel on its way, the substance of that gospel, as I preached it to you and as you received it, consists in the facts which I have just stated.

Christ's resurrection precludes a general denial of resurrection (15 : 12-19)

Now, assuming the truth of the cardinal point in my preaching—namely, that Christ rose from the dead—how can some of your number say that there is no such thing as resurrection of the dead? Look at the consequences of such a denial. If resurrection in general is to be thus denied, the resurrection of Christ (which you have believed as an essential fact of the gospel) would have to be denied also; and if that is denied, our teaching would have to be regarded as false, and your faith (which was built upon this alleged fact) would be undermined. A further consequence would follow: such a sweeping denial would challenge the truth of our testimony to the fact of Christ's resurrection. We asserted his resurrection as a fact; if the current denial of resurrection is warranted, our assertion is false. For if there is, in general, no such thing as resurrection, then, of course, there could be no specific instance of it, such as the resurrection of Christ; and if this alleged event on which you based your hope

of salvation did not occur, then your confidence was groundless, and you have not been saved at all. A further consequence would follow such a denial: our fellow-Christians who have died have not been saved. If in our present life we have only a hope which is doomed to disappointment, how dreary a prospect should we have in view of all our labors and sufferings!

Christ's resurrection the guaranty of the resurrection of his followers (15 : 20-28)

But how contrary to fact are all such doubts! Christ did rise from the dead, and his resurrection is the pledge of the resurrection of his people. For as Adam, the natural head of the race, introduced sin and its consequence, death, so has Christ, the spiritual head of humanity, guaranteed the victory of life. In achieving this victory this is the divinely arranged order: First, Christ's resurrection, the type and pledge of resurrection; then the resurrection of his followers at his advent; then the consummation of the age, when he shall surrender his mediatorial rule to God, having put in subjection all hostile powers. For, as the Scripture intimates, he will subdue all foes, the last of which is death. But, of course, this subjection of all things to Christ does not include God himself; on the contrary, God remains supreme, and even Christ shall voluntarily subject himself to God, that he may be the power which rules supreme in the perfected Messianic kingdom.

If we could not cherish such a hope of future blessedness, there would be no meaning or comfort in vicarious

baptism on behalf of the dead. If the dead are not to live, it is meaningless to receive baptism in their stead. If the dead rise not, what folly it is for us Christian workers to go on exposing ourselves to dangers and to death! For such is my life. I solemnly assert that, as truly as I boast over you as my converts, I am every day at the point of death from peril and hardship. If with no good hope of reward in the future life I contended with strong and cruel enemies at Ephesus, of what use was my effort? On this supposition the natural conclusion would be: Let us freely enjoy the present life, for there is nothing beyond it. But I warn you against the immoral conclusion which is likely to follow the denial of resurrection; association with such deniers will lead to the adoption of their evil principles. Arouse yourselves from the stupor caused by this denial; refuse to yield to those who defend it; their pretended knowledge is but ignorance of God; I speak thus to shame you for having allowed yourselves to be influenced by such persons.

The futility of Christian faith without belief in the resurrection (15 : 29-34)

But someone will raise the objection: How can resurrection be conceived? With what sort of a body do men come forth from the realm of the dead? A thoughtless objection! In the reproduction of grain death is necessary to the fuller life which issues from the seed sown; and, moreover, the product which issues from the seed is something new and something greater than the seed itself. God, in the mysterious processes of nature, clothes

An argument for the resurrection derived from analogy (15 : 35-44)

the life of various seeds in new forms which are appropriate to their various natures. Another analogy carries us a step farther. In nature we observe a great variety of bodies adapted to the elements—earth, sea, air—in which various creatures are to live. In like manner, as between heaven and earth there is a difference in the bodies of their inhabitants as respects dignity and beauty; likewise among the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, and stars, there is wide difference in brilliancy. There is an equal difference between the resurrection body and that which dies and is buried; the latter is subject to the law of corruption, decay, and death, sharing the fate of nature, while the former is free from this law and belongs to a higher order.

An argument from the order of natural and spiritual (15 : 45-49)

As the present body is adapted to this perishable order of nature in which we now live, so the future body shall be adapted to the life of the world of the Spirit. Hence Adam, the head of natural humanity, may be described as partaking in nature's decay and corruption; while Christ, the head of spiritual humanity, may be described as a Spirit who brings our life to perfection in the world to come. But the processes of nature come first, those of the spiritual world last, in order of time. The head of natural humanity belongs to the changing and perishing order; the head of spiritual humanity to the higher and heavenly sphere; and, accordingly, man on his natural side shares in the changing and perishing order of nature, while through union with Christ he shares in the heavenly order.

As, therefore, we share the fate of nature in this world, so we shall attain the likeness of the glorified Christ in the world to come.

The perfection of the future life (15 : 50-58)

But we may be certain that our present corruptible bodies cannot partake of the life of that heavenly world. A marvellous transformation will be accomplished at Christ's coming. That transformation will affect living and dead alike. Suddenly the Lord will come and raise the dead and transform us all, whether living or dead, into his own likeness. For our natures must be purged of all corruptible elements. And when this transformation shall be accomplished, then the triumph of life over death will be complete, and the soul can celebrate its final victory. It is sin which imparts bitterness to death, and it is the law which intensifies the power of sin, but we praise God that through Christ he delivers us from both these hostile powers. And now since we obtain this deliverance only through Christ, let us be obedient, faithful, and true to him, and we shall not fail of our heavenly reward.

13. *The Collection for the Jerusalem Church and Personal References* (16)

The contribution for the needy Christians at Jerusalem (16 : 1-9)

Be diligent in laying aside your alms on each Lord's day for your needy fellow-Christians at Jerusalem, so that your contributions may be ready when I next visit you. Then your gifts may be sent by such delegates as you may appoint, and, if occasion serve, we may go together. I

am coming to you by way of Macedonia, and expect to remain some time, perhaps all winter, and then to move on, for I do not want to pay you a mere passing visit; but I hope to stay till Pentecost here at Ephesus, where I am meeting at once with great opportunities and with great opposition.

Possible visits from Timothy and Apollos (16 : 10-12)

If Timothy visits you, give him no cause of anxiety and receive him with respect, and send him back to me with the bearers of this letter. Apollos was not disposed to visit you at present, but hopes to do so later.

Exhortations and salutations (16 : 13-24)

Be ready for the Lord's coming, faithful, courageous, and manly in your religious life, banishing the spirit of faction by the spirit of love. Accept the leadership of those faithful laborers who in coming to me supplied the lack of your presence. All the Christians here send salutations. I add my greeting in my own handwriting. If professing Christians among you continue by jealousy and strife to deny their love to Christ, their end must be destruction. Our Lord is coming to judgment. The grace of Christ and my love be with you.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

I

HOW THE EPISTLE CAME TO BE WRITTEN

The principal circumstances which called forth this epistle were as follows: Titus had been sent by the apostle to Corinth to learn the condition of the church there (2 Cor. 7 : 6). Had the spirit of faction subsided or increased? Had the offender, spoken of in the First Epistle (5), been disciplined? Was personal hostility to himself on the wane or on the increase? Such were some of the questions which were agitating the apostle's mind. Meantime, he was driven from Ephesus by the tumult raised by the craft of shrinemakers (Acts 19 : 23 ff.); he appears to have been in impaired health at the time; and, to add to his sufferings, when he arrived at Troas, where he expected to meet Titus and to hear from Corinth, his hopes were disappointed (2 Cor. 2 : 12, 13).

But the apostle pressed on into Macedonia, where he met Titus with news of the Corinthian Church. His report was, in the main, encouraging. The fornicator had

been excommunicated, and, what was still better, had repented, so that Paul could now recommend his restoration. The church as a whole was loyal to the apostle and to his teaching. A minority, however, was still making trouble. The factious spirit still remained. On the part of some, hostility to him had increased.

The report of Titus thus gave rise to mingled joy and grief. The epistle reflects both these feelings. The earlier chapters are predominantly cheerful and commendatory, the later mainly sorrowful and severe. In the light of these facts the aim of the letter may be described as threefold: (1) to encourage and instruct the church (1-7); (2) to induce the Corinthians to make a collection for the poor Judean churches (8, 9), and (3) to defend the writer's apostolic authority against the calumnies of his enemies (10-13).

II

THE CHARACTER AND VALUE OF THE EPISTLE

The epistle is less orderly in its structure than most of Paul's letters. It bears the traces of the tumult of passion out of which it sprang. The thoughts flow, as it were, red hot from the furnace of the apostle's feeling and are accordingly characterized by intense heat and by a somewhat rough and jagged form. In the mingling of

joy and grief, of praise and indignation, of tender feeling and bitter irony, this epistle is unequalled among the writings of Paul. It should be added that in the "tempest, torrent, and whirlwind of his passion" the apostle has often passed abruptly from one point to another, has disregarded, in an unusual degree, grammatical regularity and precision, and has accordingly furnished his readers with some of the most obscure and difficult passages to be found in all his writings.

Despite the obscurity of the epistle, it throws important light upon the personality of the apostle. It presents him in the character of a defender of his own personal honor and official authority. Though reluctant to speak so much of himself as he feels compelled to do, he speaks in his own defence with impressive dignity and courage. No epistle more clearly reflects Paul's sense of personal honor and his consciousness of a divinely given mission in the founding of the church.

III

THE RELATION OF THIS EPISTLE TO FIRST CORINTHIANS

No one can read the two epistles to the Corinthians together without seeing that they contemplate and reflect

essentially the same conditions. The allusions to moral faults and Judaizing tendencies in the Corinthian church, and the references to specific topics which are treated in the earlier letter show that they were not far separated in point of time. We learn from several references in the second letter (1 : 15, 16; 2 : 12, 13; 8 : 1; 9 : 2) that it was written in Macedonia. In it the apostle also alludes to the persecutions which he had recently experienced in Asia (1 : 8). Thus the letter falls within the sojourn of Paul in Macedonia (Acts 20 : 1 ff.) after his long residence in Ephesus and, very probably, within the same year as 1 Corinthians, A.D. 57.

But, despite this close relation of the two epistles, they are, in many respects, quite unlike. The Second Epistle is far more special, personal, and apologetic than the first. In tone it is much more severe. It makes more use of satire and irony. In 2 Corinthians the various moods of the apostle so intermingle and play into one another that one is often at a loss to know in just what sense some of his words are intended to be taken. It is largely due to this mingling of tenderness and severity, of seriousness and satire, that the epistle is so obscure. But if, on the one hand, some passages almost defy clear explanation (*e.g.*, 10 : 13-16; 11 : 12), there are others which are justly regarded as among the brightest gems of biblical literature (*e.g.*, 3 : 1-11; 4 : 7-15; 5 : 1-10; 11 : 21-28).

IV

THE SECOND MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS

1. *Salutation and Thanksgiving* (1 : 1-11)

Salutation (1 : 1, 2)

I, Paul, a divinely appointed messenger of Christ, and Timothy, my fellow-worker, salute you Corinthians, and all the Achaian Christians, with wishes of mercy and peace.

Thanksgiving for Christian comfort (1 : 3-11)

We render praise to God, the Father of Christ and the Source of all spiritual consolation and grace, by whom we are strengthened in our sufferings and enabled to strengthen and encourage others. For as we are one with Christ in suffering, so, through Christ, are we one with you in comfort. But whether we experience pain or consolation, it is for your spiritual good; and we know that if you must suffer as we do, you may also share the consolation which is ours. For you know how we did suffer, almost beyond the power of endurance, in Asia, so that we seemed doomed to death. This experience taught us our dependence for life upon God, the Giver of life, by whose power, in answer to your prayers, we were delivered from death, and for whose mercy we all render praise to him.

2. *Paul's Confidence in the Church* (1 : 12 to 2 : 11)

We are conscious of an earnest and pure purpose in our preaching and teaching, and especially so in our

The apostle's sincerity and constancy of purpose (1 : 12-22)

work on your behalf. Our letters are to be understood in their plain and obvious meaning, and I hope that we shall have, more and more, a mutual understanding and sympathy, which shall be perfected at the Lord's coming. It was in this hope that I formerly planned to make you two visits, one on my way to Macedonia, and one on my return from it, and then to go on to Judea. Now that you find me writing to you from Macedonia, you may, perhaps, consider me changeable and my promises unreliable. But I solemnly assure you that I am guilty of no such capricious vacillation. Christ, who was the subject of our preaching, is the absolutely true and trustworthy One; he spoke with a divine authority and certitude, and he it is who saved us and made us his representatives. How contrary, then, to Christ and his gospel would be the weak and fickle conduct which is falsely imputed to us!

His reluctance to take the attitude of a censor the real cause of his delay in visiting the church (1 : 23 to 2 : 4)

But I assert before God, as my soul shall answer for it, that I changed my plan of visiting you so as to avoid the necessity of severely censuring you. In so speaking I do not mean to assume the control over your religious life, but only the right to act toward you in such a way as to promote your true happiness and well-being; for your faith is steadfast. I wish to cause you happiness, not sorrow; therefore I decided not to visit you at a time when the only result of my so doing would be painful to us both. For if I were to come and rebuke you, thus

causing you pain, you, who should welcome me with joy, would only receive me with the grieved and wounded feelings which I had myself caused. I accordingly wrote the rebukes contained in my former letter, in order that by repentance and reformation you might be enabled to give me joy instead of grief at my coming, knowing, as I do, that you will find your own happiness in mine. The severity of that letter cost me bitter suffering; but I wrote as I did, not for the sake of wounding you, but that you might see the abundance of my love in my anxious desire for your spiritual good.

The forgiveness and restoration to fellowship of the incestuous man a fitting sequel to his discipline (2 : 5-11)

Now as respects the offender who was the chief occasion of all this pain, it was not myself so much as a portion of your church that he injured—a portion of the church, I say, for I do not hold the whole congregation responsible for sympathy with him. Since this offender has been adequately punished by the sentence of the majority, the course to be pursued now is not that of inflicting further penalty, but that of forgiveness and consolation, so that he be not driven to despair. Give him full proof of your Christian sympathy and pity, for the punishment which, by my direction, you inflicted upon him has amply shown your readiness to obey my instructions. In the matter of forgiving offences I am sure that we are in entire sympathy; if you are willing to pardon this man, I also am willing, and, in turn, I suppose that, in any case of my pardoning, your forgiveness would follow mine. In all

cases of my forgiving such offences I do it in the interest of the church and with the remembrance that Christ is the witness of my behavior; thus do I forgive and seek to restore the wrong-doer, lest Satan may obtain control over him, for we know very well his eagerness to exercise such power.

3. *The Apostle's Efforts on behalf of the Church* (2 : 12 to 5 : 10)

The solemn responsibility of the preacher (2 : 12-17)

When in my missionary journey I reached Troas and found there great opportunities for Christian work, I was so distressed, because I did not find Titus there with news from you, that I at once crossed over to Macedonia. But I give thanks to God, who leads me on in triumph over Christ's foes, and by me spreads far and wide the knowledge of himself, like a cloud of fragrant incense. For my preaching, like an odor of incense, proclaims victory and salvation to those who accept the gospel, while it proclaims defeat and condemnation to those who refuse it. Who is qualified for so responsible a work? I can at least say this, that, unlike most of my adversaries, I do not make my ministry a source of personal profit, but preach the gospel of Christ with a pure purpose and under a sense of my accountability to God.

I suppose you see in these statements a fresh example of that self-commendation which my adversaries ascribe to me. Do I need, like them, to avail myself of commen-

datory letters? No. You Corinthian Christians are my letter of recommendation; the story of your conversion and growth is inscribed on my heart, and, wherever I go, that story is read, and constitutes the best commendation of my work. Your Christian life is like a letter written by Christ, using us as his amanuenses, and written, not with perishable ink, but with the Spirit of the Eternal—written, not as the law was, by the finger of God on stone tablets, but by the living power of God on human hearts. It is this divine attestation of my ministry which guarantees the success of my apostolic labors, not because I am in myself adequate for such a work, but because God gives me the needful wisdom and strength. He has equipped me for my work as a preacher of the gospel of life, which, unlike the old covenant, is not a legal system, but a spiritual power; for the law can only pronounce the sentence of death for sin, while the Spirit delivers man from its power by bestowing life. How completely does the gospel surpass the law! For if the law, with its threats of penalty for sin, its external rules and commandments, was ushered in by such splendors on Sinai that the face of Moses, when he descended from the mount, was still so radiant with the divine glory that the people could not look upon it (although it was but a transient glory), how much more glorious is the gospel of liberty and life. For if the dispensation which could only pronounce doom upon sin was glorious, how much more

Paul's best testimonial as a preacher the Corinthian church itself (3 : 1-5)

His gospel of life and liberty an inspiring theme (3 : 6-11)

so is the gospel which bestows forgiveness and freedom from sin. For glorious as the law was, its glory pales before the surpassing splendor of the gospel. For if that which was transient was glorious, how much more glorious is that which endures forever.

The old and the new covenants compared (3 : 12-18)

Inspired by the hope of success which the nature of the gospel warrants, I speak without reserve or disguise. I have no occasion to dissemble or to conceal anything (as my Judaizing opponents do), as Moses veiled his face so that the people might not see the fading glory. The people were blind to the temporary character of the legal system, and even to this day are they unable to perceive that the old covenant has been done away in Christ. The Jews and Judaizers are still unable to receive the truth that the law has come to an end. But when they shall truly receive Christ, their eyes will be opened to this truth. Now Christ is the life-giving Spirit that makes free, and those who receive him are delivered from slavery to sin and to the law. And as we Christians thus attentively look with unclouded vision upon the reflection of the divine glory which is revealed in the gospel of Christ, we are changed more and more into the likeness of the perfect ideal upon which we look, through the operation upon us of the transforming power of Christ, the Giver of spiritual life.

Since now, in accordance with the mercy bestowed upon me, I have been intrusted with this life-giving gos-

The apostle's preaching straightforward and simple (4 : 1-6)

pel, I proclaim it with boldness and courage. I have pursued no course which can justly bring upon me the charge of shamefulness, of cunning, or of adulterating the gospel; on the contrary, I have avoided all arts and intrigues (such as others have adopted), and, knowing that God is the judge of my work, have sought access to the hearts of men only by bringing to them the truthful message of God's word. For if the meaning of the gospel which I preach is hidden, as by a veil, from any minds, it is so only in the case of those who are persisting in an evil life and whose minds are so blinded by Satan that they cannot see the light of the glad tidings of Christ, the embodiment of all divine perfection. Criticisms of us and of our work are of small moment. Our preaching consists in the proclamation that Christ is Lord and not in defences of ourselves; so far as we proclaim anything about ourselves it is only this, that we are set to do the will of Christ in seeking your salvation. Our message is from God. As at creation he called light into being, so has he caused his spiritual light, the knowledge of his saving grace through Christ, to spring up in our hearts, not that we might keep and enjoy it for ourselves, but that we might convey to others this knowledge of God, this heavenly light which shines with undimmed splendor in the countenance of the Lord.

But my work of spreading the glorious gospel is limited and hindered by a frail body, so that it should be all the

The apostle's hindrances and sufferings in his work (4 : 7-15)

more evident that it is God's power and not mine which explains my success. I am subject to every kind of hindrance and discouragement; I am, as it were, repeating the death of Christ in my own experience, in order that I may also repeat his glorious victory over the sufferings and perils of death. And thus in undergoing such labors and hardships, I am all the while exposed to death, while the deliverance that Jesus gives me constantly contributes to your spiritual benefit. But, despite my weakness and suffering, I am sustained by faith in the unseen Saviour; my work proceeds in the confidence that we all together shall share in the glorified life of Christ in heaven. All my sufferings I have cheerfully endured, in order that I might increase your Christian zeal, so that the saving benefits of God's mercy may be, by our united efforts, the more widely extended, and that a fuller chorus of praise, increased by many voices, may rise to God in gratitude for his salvation.

His courage undiminished (4 : 16-18)

With such encouragements I am not disheartened; although the body is perishing, the spirit is sustained by fresh strength. The sufferings which I am now enduring are trifling when weighed over against their reward in the abiding glory of the life to come; meanwhile I fix my view not upon the visible but upon the invisible world, for the visible world is destined to pass away, but the invisible is imperishable.

I am certain that even if I should not live till the Lord

comes and my perishable body should be destroyed by death, God will provide me in the life to come with a permanent and imperishable resurrection body. For while we dwell in this present earthly body, as in a destructible tent, we are conscious of our imperfection, and we sigh and yearn for that transformation which awaits us when the glorified body shall be given us, cherishing as we do the confidence that when Christ comes, we shall meet him, not as disembodied spirits, but in possession of bodies. For we who are living in the body do, indeed, shrink from death; we naturally dread the process of dissolution and prefer to live till the Lord's coming, and to be transformed alive. Now God has by his Spirit wrought in us the assurance that the perishable body shall be transformed and glorified in the resurrection life. In all our afflictions we are sustained by the thought that, so long as we are living this perishable life in the flesh, we are only waiting to enter upon the greater blessedness of the heavenly world (for in this life we live in the anticipation rather than in the possession of the vision of the glorified Christ); we are, I say, cheered by the prospect of that coming glory, and are ready at any time to die, and thus to enter into the immediate presence of Christ. Since we are thus as ready to die as to live, it is our one ambition to make ourselves acceptable to Christ, whether we be among the dead or the living at his coming. For whether at that event we be living or dead, we must all be judged

The glorious prospect of the life to come compensates for all present troubles (5 : 1-10)

by Christ and receive from him the reward corresponding to what we have done in our earthly life.

4. *The Motives of Paul's Labor* (5 : 11 to 6 : 13)

Paul's aim is to win men to a holy life (5 : 11-13)

Since we thus recognize the reverence which is due to Christ as judge, we seek to induce men to prepare for the judgment. Whether we do this with any admixture of human motives, God knows, and on this question I hope that your own moral judgment will not hesitate to give a favorable verdict. I am not resuming the practice of self-praise (which my critics impute to me), but am supplying you a basis on which you may defend me and reply to the aspersions of my hypocritical opponents who base their claims upon external advantages rather than spiritual endowments. For whether our zeal is madness (as they say), or springs from sound understanding, in any case it is directed to the honor of God and to your salvation.

The love of Christ his inspiring motive (5 : 14-16)

For the sense of Christ's great love for men has been the compelling motive of my service ever since I reached the conclusion that in Christ's saving death the moral transformation of all, which I may call death to sin, was included, and that his saving death had this for its meaning and purpose; namely, that they who are quickened into a holy life in him should not live selfishly, but should give themselves up to his service who died and rose to save them. Since it is thus the holy and unselfish life which is essential, I attach no importance to what is out-

ward and incidental in the life of men ; not even in the case of Christ do his earthly, outward appearance and relations constitute for me, as formerly, his chief significance ; I now know him according to his higher, spiritual nature as the risen and glorified Redeemer. If, then, one knows Christ in this living, spiritual fellowship, it will follow that he has a new and higher point of view from which the world and life will be regarded. This new world has been opened to us through the grace of God, who in the death of Christ has abolished the discord which existed between himself and us and has commissioned me to proclaim its abolition. And this is the burden of my message : it was God, who in the saving work of Christ restored the broken fellowship between mankind and himself, proclaiming full and free forgiveness and making us the messengers of his saving mercy. Accordingly, we herald in Christ's name the gospel which God has bidden us speak ; we beg you to accept the proffered salvation, and thus fulfil the purpose of Christ's death on your behalf. For it was for our salvation that God subjected the sinless Christ to the experience of death, the lot of sinners, that we might be forgiven and accepted with God through his saving work.

The new life of spiritual fellowship in Christ (5 : 17–21)

And since we are joint laborers with Christ, we exhort you not to frustrate the work of God's grace in your hearts by an unchristian life. For God has warned us in Scripture that the present is the time for receiving his gracious

His absolute sincerity and persistent zeal (6 : 1–10)

salvation. Avoid all conduct which might bring criticism and reproach upon my work among you. My work bears its own testimony to my sincerity and zeal through the sufferings and toils which I endure, through the purity, consecration, and gentleness of my life, and through the abundant gift of divine inspiration and strength which was given me, which armed me for attack and defence against the evils by which I was surrounded. Whether I was esteemed or defamed, my work commended itself ; though regarded as dishonest, I was true ; though treated as obscure, I was recognized for my work's sake ; though at the point of death from danger and hardship, God preserved my life ; though severely disciplined by suffering, I did not sink under it ; though grieved, I rejoiced ; though poor and homeless, I enriched many lives from my store of spiritual treasures.

An affectionate appeal to the church (6 : 11-13)

I am speaking to you Corinthians with the utmost frankness and confidence ; my heart is full of love for you. If there is any lack of love between us it is on your side, not on mine. Now, in return for my affection (I am speaking to you as a father speaks to his children), open your hearts in love to me.

5. *The Question of Intercourse with Heathen* (6 : 14 to 7 : 1)

Avoid alliances with unconverted heathen which would compromise the difference between purity and corruption,

Christ and Satan, faith and unbelief, God's temple and idol worship, for we Christians are a spiritual sanctuary of God. To us apply the words of Scripture which speak of those with whom God dwells and who are his special possession, sanctified, purified, and fitted for loving obedience and fellowship with him. Since we have such assurances of God's favor, let us purify ourselves from every pollution, whether of body or of spirit, and, incited thereto by a sense of God's holy requirements, bring our Christian character to its full perfection.

Idol worship and its associations to be avoided (6 : 14 to 7 : 1)

6. *The Mission of Titus* (7 : 2-16)

Make room for me in your hearts; when I was among you I injured no one. And this I say not to taunt you for your lack of love to me, but, as I have said before, because of a love for you which shall not fail whether I live or die. I use no restraint with you; I am proud of you; my joy outweighs all my suffering.

Love the motive of Paul's rebukes and warnings (7 : 2-4)

For when I arrived in Macedonia I was oppressed with trials and hardships, both from without and from within. But God, who comforts those who are bowed down with grief, granted me the consolation of meeting Titus. Not only did his presence cheer me, but especially did the comfort which he had derived from his visit among you, and the report which he gave of your sorrow for your faults and your eager desire to see me, soothe my spirit; when I received this news, my joy was all the greater.

The joy brought to the apostle's heart by the report of Titus (7 : 5-16)

Formerly I regretted saddening you by the severity of my earlier letter (for I know that it pained you for a time), but now I am glad that I rebuked you as I did, not, indeed, because my letter grieved you, but because it led you to a sincere repentance in the sight of God, proving that my course issued not in injury, but in blessing to you. For the effect of a sincere grief for sin in the sight of God is a penitence which leads to the attainment of salvation with its eternal satisfaction; while a mere selfish grief which regrets only the reproof, but not the sin itself, tends only to moral ruin. Consider the effects of this true sorrow in yourselves, what efforts to make amends for the offence, yes, what eagerness to clear yourselves from blame, what vexation at the disgrace, what fear of my displeasure, what desire for my approval, what readiness to discipline the offender, what a punishment of him! You have fully cleared yourselves from the guilt of sharing or condoning this offence. I wrote thus severely to you not so much to punish the wrong-doer or to avenge him who suffered the wrong, as that I might evoke into clear expression, before God, that zealous interest which you cherish toward me. Since this object has been attained, I am content; the joy which Titus derived from his presence with you added greatly to my own consolation, for he found great comfort in your company. For all the commendations of you which I had expressed to him were confirmed by his knowledge of you.

And now, since his visit, he loves you even more than before, as he recalls your readiness to obey our counsel and your eager and anxious zeal to do your whole duty. I am glad that in every respect you sustained my confidence in you.

7. *The Collection for the Judean Churches* (8, 9)

The hearty generosity of the Macedonian churches (8 : 1-5)

Now I want you to know how graciously God has wrought upon the churches of Macedonia in quickening them, in the midst of their poverty and distress, to attest their Christian zeal by abundant generosity. For to the limit of their ability, yes, and beyond it, did they voluntarily give, even urging us to grant them the privilege of sharing in the contribution for their needy fellow-Christians, and their giving quite surpassed my expectations, since they made not only contributions of money, but surrendered themselves, in obedience to God's will, to Christ's authority, and to my guidance. This success of the collections in Macedonia led me to entreat Titus to return to Corinth and complete the work of charity which had been begun among you on his former visit. And I hope your liberality will prove equal to the other Christian virtues which you have proved yourselves to possess. I do not command you to contribute ; I only desire by holding up before you the example of others, to test the genuineness of your Christian love. Consider the example of Christ's self-denying love ; although in possession of divine glory

Such liberality rounds out Christian virtues (8 : 6-11)

and blessedness, he renounced these in order by his renunciation to bless you with the fulness of his salvation. I give you my advice in the matter; and this advice, instead of command, is wholesome for you and sufficient to enlist your co-operation, since you had, a year ago, anticipated all others in beginning to make the collection, and, indeed, were the first to propose it. Now complete the work, that you may show yourselves as ready to carry the collection into effect as you were ready to plan it.

It must be proportioned to ability (8 : 12-15)

For if you have the willingness to give, God measures his approval of your contributions by your ability and does not require you to go beyond it. I am not proposing this collection to relieve others at the cost of distress to you; burdens must be equalized; as you are generously supplying the needs of others now, so, at another time, your need may be equally relieved by others, so that the principle of equity may obtain and—as when the Israelites gathered manna—each person may have neither more nor less than he needs.

The manner in which the collection is to be made (8 : 16-24)

I give thanks to God who has inspired the heart of Titus with the same earnestness in making this contribution which I myself feel; he did, indeed, receive a summons from me to go to Corinth, but it was not needful, for of his own free will he determined to visit you. And with him I have sent the Christian brother whose labors in preaching the gospel render him worthy of all confidence; who, moreover, has been designated by the

churches of Macedonia to accompany me to Jerusalem when I bear this gift, with whose collection I am charged, that Christ might be honored and the burden of my responsibility lightened. For I am careful to guard myself from all suspicion to which my administration of this benefaction may expose me, in my eager regard for what is right, not only in God's sight, but in the estimate of men. With Titus and the brother just named I have sent a fellow-Christian whom we have put to the proof by many trials, and who is now even more zealous than ever for the work among you from the full trust which he has in you. If inquiry be made about Titus, commend him as my associate and fellow-laborer on your behalf; as for the brethren who accompany him, they are the delegates of the churches and an honor to Christ. Give to them and to the churches which have sent them the proof of your Christian love, and show how well-founded is my praise of your generosity.

Paul's confidence in the generosity of the readers (9 : 1-5)

It is needless for me to write you about the collection in question, for the willingness of you Achaians, during the year past, to participate in it has been well known and has been an occasion of my praising you to the Macedonian Christians, upon most of whom your readiness has operated as a strong incentive. Now I have sent to you Titus and his two companions, in order to prove that my praise of you was not an empty boast with respect to the readiness which I have claimed for you.

I was anxious to test and justify this claim lest, perhaps, when I come to visit you, Macedonians who may accompany me should find that you are not ready, and thus shame should fall upon me (not to speak of your disgrace) by the failure of the claim which I had made respecting your readiness. Therefore I thought it needful that these brethren should visit you before my coming and arrange for the completion of the bounty which you promised to have ready, so that it might be liberal and not scanty.

The rewards of generosity (9 : 6-15)

Remember, he who scatters but a little seed reaps but a small harvest, while he who largely distributes blessing reaps a rich reward of blessing. In this matter let each man give freely and spontaneously; not reluctantly or as if from compulsion, for, as the Scripture says, it is the willing giver whom God approves. And God is able to furnish you abundantly with all earthly goods, so that all your own wants may be supplied and you may give of your abundance to every worthy cause, and thus may realize the blessedness which the Psalmist ascribes to the generous, beneficent man. Now God, who supplies you with the good seed for sowing out of which a harvest of blessing shall grow, will richly increase your means of beneficence and multiply the fruitage of your goodness by means of your enrichment with all earthly goods by the free giving of which you will call forth thanksgivings to God from those to whom I bear your bounty. For the benefit flowing from your generosity is not simply that

it supplies the necessities of your fellow-Christians, but that it evokes from them praise and gratitude to God, inasmuch as they praise God for the proof which your generosity gives of your obedience to the gospel and for the sincerity of your fellowship with them and with others, while they, too, prayerfully long with grateful love for your fellowship because they see God's grace so manifested in your life. God be praised for the indescribable gift of his grace to us in the blessings of salvation through Christ.

8. *Paul's Defence of his Apostolic Authority* (10 to 12)

The charge that Paul is weak and vacillating is shallow (10 : 1–11)

Now as for myself, I earnestly entreat you by the gentle and forgiving love of Christ which I wish to imitate (I, who, my enemies say, am very humble when present among you and courageous only when absent)—I pray that, when I next visit you, I may have no occasion to treat any of you with that boldness which I am conscious of the right to use in the name of Christ, and which I may have to exercise toward certain persons who charge me with inconsistency and timidity. For, though we are still living the natural life, the sinful impulses of unrenewed human nature are not the powers by which our campaign against evil is carried on, for the weapons which we wield are not the implements of human weakness, but are such as God makes effective for the overthrow of the fortresses of evil; before these weapons all hostile plans and every battlement of human pride shall fall, and every rebellious

thought be brought into submission to Christ; and when your obedience is complete, I am ready to punish those who still resist. Do you, too, think that you saw in me, when present with you, the appearance of weakness and cowardice? In answer I unhesitatingly affirm that I am as sincere and devoted a servant of Christ as are those who claim superiority over me. For if I glory more than ever in the authority which Christ has given me (not for your destruction but for your edification), the truth will not refute my claim, as if I were one who merely sought to overawe you with empty threats. For, say my opponents, though he writes with energy and courage, when present he acts without force and his teaching commands no respect. Let anyone who says this rest assured that what I write when absent I will bear out in action when present. For my courage does not consist in comparing myself with certain of my self-satisfied opponents; I leave it to them to exhibit the folly of such a method of defence. But I, for my part, will make no boast which goes beyond the limits of the actual work, including your conversion, which God has enabled me to do. For in caring for the interests of your church I am not seeking unduly to extend the sphere of my apostolic labors, for in the preaching of the gospel I did extend my work to Corinth. I am not, I repeat, setting up claims to the results of others' labors, but cherish the hope that, with the increase of your Christian devotion, I may still further ex-

Paul reluctant to compare himself with others (10 : 12–18)

pand the sphere of my apostolic work, so as to carry the glad tidings to regions beyond you and not to lay claim (as some do) to work furnished ready to hand within the field of activity divinely destined for another. The true maxim for all assertion of claims is this: Not ostentatious self-glorying, but glorying in the grace of God by which our labors are achieved. For it is not our self-assertions, but God's blessing attending our work and making it successful, that attests it as acceptable to him.

The apostle's embarrassment at having to defend himself and compare himself with others (11:1-15)

I hope you can still endure a little more of my foolish boasting, but I need hardly express the hope; you are really enduring my self-exaltation bravely. This boasting is not selfish, but springs from my jealous affection for you; I have given you as a pure bride to Christ and cannot endure the thought of your becoming unfaithful to him. I am anxious lest false and pretentious teachers should seduce you, as Satan beguiled Eve, from your single-minded faithfulness to Christ. For I observe that toward those who purport to bring you a far different gospel from that which I preached to you, you are very tolerant; why not toward me, for I venture to think myself in no respect inferior to your pre-eminent apostles. Yes, though I am, as they say, untrained in the art of speech, yet I am not wanting in the knowledge of divine truth, which I have amply shown to all in my work among you. Or, perhaps I forfeited my claim to be an apostle by renouncing my right to support, in order to teach you gra-

tuitously. This is what I did : I took more than their due for my support from other churches in order that I might render service to you without compensation. And during my stay with you, though I was in need, I asked no gift from anyone, for my lack was supplied by the contribution which the Macedonian churches sent to my aid by the hands of the brethren whom you know, and I thus maintained myself without gifts from you, and will continue to do so. I solemnly assure you that I shall permit no one in Achaia to deprive me of the claim that I preach the gospel without compensation. Why? Is it because I disdain the gifts which your love would prompt? No; but because I will persist in the effort to deprive my opponents of the opportunity to charge me with selfishness; this I do in order that in the matter of unselfishness on which they plume themselves, I may show that they are on no higher plane than I. They are hypocritical self-seekers, wearing, for concealment, the garb of apostles. And such an effort to conceal their true character is quite natural for them, since Satan, their real master, puts on, in his temptations of men, the guise of a pure angel. It is not strange, therefore, that his servants should pretend to be promoting the cause of truth; their final fate shall be appropriate to their action.

This boasting a necessity (11 : 16-21)

I repeat: Do you think me a fool? If you do think me such, yet bear with me a little in my folly, that I too, like my opponents, may boast a little. To this boastful speech I

feel impelled not by the higher impulse of Christ's inspiration, but by the necessity of self-defence. Since others are so forcibly urging their claims upon you, I am not at liberty to be wholly silent concerning my own. For you Corinthians, being so very wise yourselves, have a wonderful tolerance for fools. I observe that you are even capable of bearing with people who only insult and injure you in their proud superiority. I freely admit that for such treatment of you I was (to use *their* word) too weak. Yet—resuming my foolish boasting—I venture to say that I can match any of their claims. If they pride themselves upon their descent from the chosen people, I can make the same claim. If they refer to their services for Christ, I (foolish as I feel in making such comparisons) dare claim to surpass them. What sufferings in Christ's cause have they endured to compare with mine? Hear the story of the punishments, the perils, the privations, the toils, the hardships which I have endured for Christ's sake, and judge. And add to these the burdens of anxiety which press upon me in my concern for all the churches. By sympathy I enter into the life of my converts; I realize the doubts of the wavering and am grieved at the fall of the tempted. Thus if in self-defence I must boast I will appeal, in support of the claims of my apostleship, to my sufferings and hardships. God is my witness that I speak with sincerity and truth. At the very beginning of my Christian life the Arabian viceroy at Damascus tried to

Paul's lineage and heroic service (11 : 22-33)

capture me, but I was let down in a basket outside the wall and thus evaded him.

Paul's special experiences attesting his apostleship (12 : 1-10)

It is necessity rather than expediency which impels me thus to defend my apostleship; but no more of it. I will appeal to my experiences as a recipient of divine revelation. Fourteen years ago I was the subject of an incomprehensible ecstasy, in which truths too great for human language were imparted to me. I will base my boast on such experiences, in which I was but the dependent, passive instrument of the Lord. But if I should urge my claims, I should not therefore be guilty of vanity, for my claims would be true; but I refrain from putting them forward lest any be led to form a higher opinion of me than my words and deeds seem to warrant. And lest I should be rendered proud by my extraordinary ecstatic experiences, a painful bodily infirmity was inflicted upon me. Earnestly did I pray for release from the infliction, but the Lord's answer was: It is enough for you that you have my favor; my power makes itself felt when there is no other support. Therefore it is in such suffering and helplessness that I exult, because then I am most clearly conscious of Christ's help. It is in such moments of utter dependence that the divine strength most sustains me and makes my service effective.

An ironical assertion of his claim (12 : 11-13)

If my folly in self-defence still continues, it is your fault, for you knew my work and ought to have appreciated it; for, though I make no claims, I think I may claim equal-

ity with your super-eminent apostles. For that I am a genuine apostle my labors and behavior among you ought to show. For what injustice did you receive at my hands except this, that I asked no support from you? I hope you can overlook this fault.

Paul's sincere devotion to his disciples' good (12 : 14-18)

I am hoping to visit you a third time, and I shall continue, as before, to support myself; for it is not your possessions but your hearts that I want; you are my children, and children do not treasure up wealth for their parents, but parents for their children. I will gladly give my all for you. Am I to find that the greater my affection is for you, the less is yours in return? But some one may suggest that though I did not receive personal support from you, I shrewdly managed to obtain your money through those whom I sent to you. Is this insinuation true? Did Titus or any of my other messengers defraud you in any way? Did not we pursue the same course of unselfish service?

His independence of human judgment (12 : 19-21)

Do not suppose that for this long time I have been arguing my case before you as if you were my judges. No! As Christ's minister, God alone is my judge. But I do seek the upbuilding of your Christian life. I am anxious lest, when I visit you, you will not be in such a state as I could wish and I shall have to be severe in consequence; anxious, I say, lest I shall find Corinth a scene of faction, calumny, and disorder, and shall be humiliated by finding that my labor was misspent, and shall have to

mourn over the impenitence of those who have fallen into sins of gross sensuality.

9. *Concluding Instructions and Salutations* (13)

Paul's proposed visit to Corinth and its possible results (13 : 1-10)

I shall visit you a third time and thus I shall have concerning you a threefold testimony such as the law requires to establish a case. As I have repeatedly assured you, there will be no sparing of severity this time in the case of those who persist in sin. You challenge me to prove that I am a true messenger of Christ; you should find proof enough in your own experience of my work, for through me Christ has wrought wonders in your spiritual life. For though like a helpless man he submitted to death on the cross, in the strength of God he still lives and works; in like manner I have shown the "weakness" of humble service and pitying love toward you, but I will show his holy energy when I come to deal with you. Do not always be examining me; examine yourselves. Test the soundness of your Christian life. Such a testing will show that Christ is the ruling power within you, unless, indeed, you are only spurious Christians. I trust that you will find me abiding the test and proving myself a genuine apostle. I pray that you may lead a good life, not with the selfish motive of seeing my career attested, but that you yourselves may be attested by your upright conduct, even though I should be disapproved. For the power of Christ is bestowed upon us for one end—the

effort to promote a pure and holy life. How glad would I be to find your Christian conduct so excellent that I should be powerless to proceed in severity against you ; your perfection in such a life is the end of all my desires. This is the reason why I am now writing these warnings and exhortations, that you may so reform your action that when I come I shall not be compelled to use severity in the strength of that authority which the Lord has given, the purpose of which is encouragement and edification, not degradation and punishment.

Parting salutation (13 : 11-14)

And now I take my leave of you. Reform your faults ; encourage one another ; cultivate harmony and peace ; and then God, whose gifts are love and peace, will dwell with you. Salute one another with the sacred kiss of love. Your fellow-believers greet you. The favor of Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

I

THE ORIGIN AND CHARACTER OF THE ROMAN CHURCH

When or by whom the church at Rome was founded is not known. Ecclesiastical tradition ascribes its establishment to the apostle Peter, but the New Testament furnishes no evidence for this view and it is extremely unlikely that Paul would have written to the Romans as he did if their church had been founded and fostered by another apostle. It is evident from the tone of the epistle that Paul regarded the Roman church as belonging to his sphere of labor (see 1 : 8-13). And yet it was not founded by the apostle; indeed, when he wrote the epistle (probably about A.D. 58) he had never visited Rome (see 1 : 15). A natural supposition respecting the origin of the church is that the "sojourners from Rome" (Acts 2 : 20) who became Christians on the day of Pentecost established on their return home the church of the capital. The rapid progress which the church made (see 1 : 8; 16 : 19) would be explained in part by the fact that from all parts of the

world people flocked to Rome and thus by additions from without as well as by success in winning converts at home the church would be built up.

Scholars are divided in opinion on the question whether the Roman church was predominantly Jewish or Gentile. The principal reasons for the former view are: (1) Paul argues in the epistle against the Jewish theology; (2) he devotes three chapters (9, 10, 11) to problems to which Jewish history gives rise, and (3) he sometimes speaks of his readers as if they were Jews, for example, in 7 : 1 : "I speak to men that know the law." But these peculiarities are sufficiently explained by the presence of a Jewish element, and, especially, of a Judaizing tendency in the church. We know that the Galatian and Corinthian churches were predominantly Gentile; yet in these also Paul refutes the Pharisaic theology and draws largely upon the Old Testament for his arguments and illustrations. That the church was chiefly composed of Gentiles is rendered probable (1) by the fact that Paul reckoned it as belonging to his province (see Gal. 2 : 7-9), and (2) by the way in which he almost explicitly calls his readers Gentiles in such passages as 1 : 13 and 15 : 15, 16.

II

THE MOTIVE OF THE EPISTLE

We may find the motive of the epistle partly in the fact that Paul was personally acquainted with some of the Roman Christians (16 : 3-15), and, still more, in his appreciation of the importance and influence of the church of the capital. He rightly regarded "the eternal city" as a strategic centre of Christianity, and deemed it essential for the best interest of Christian truth that the Christian community there should be promptly saved from the errors of the Pharisaic theology which had so long blinded his own eyes to the light of the gospel. Paul would have preferred to visit the church personally, as he had often purposed to do (1 : 13), but since that was impracticable at the time, he would write them a letter instead. We may well believe that the apostle saw in the condition and prospects of the church at Rome a golden opportunity to expound and illustrate his "gospel" (Gal. 2 : 2), in its contrast with Judaism, more fully than he had yet done. Accordingly, we have in the epistle the most elaborately planned and skilfully constructed arguments to be found in all Paul's writings, the practical aim of all being to confirm the readers in the conviction that men are saved, not by meritorious deeds, but by a trustful acceptance of the undeserved favor of God.

III

THE COURSE OF THOUGHT IN THE EPISTLE

It is important for a right understanding of the epistle to observe in what a strategic manner the apostle marshals his arguments. After an elaborate salutation (1 : 1-7) and thanksgiving (1 : 8-15), he introduces his theme (1 : 16, 17) : the gospel of salvation through faith in Christ. He then stops to prove at length that men cannot be saved by good works. This he does first in the case of the Gentile world by painting in dark colors the picture of heathen depravity (1 : 18-32). When one looks at the heathen, argues the apostle, it is plain that they cannot be saved by any goodness of their own. He next turns to the Jews and shows that they "practise the same things," and that they, like the Gentiles, can make no claim to salvation on the basis of their merits (2 : 1 to 3 : 20). Thus ends the *negative* argument : No salvation by works. Then begins the *positive* argument to prove that salvation is a free gift of God bestowed on condition of faith in Christ (3 : 21 to 8 : 39). What this doctrine is, in contrast to the Jewish view of salvation (3 : 21-31), how it is confirmed by the Old Testament (4), and what its practical import and consequences are (5 to 8), the apostle sets forth with a wealth of argument and power of statement unsurpassed in all his writings.

He then turns aside to consider the perplexing question: How can we reconcile the present rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish people with the promise of God in his covenant with Israel? and, after a long argument (9 to 11), reaches the conclusion that the Jews as a whole will yet be converted and that Jew and Gentile will be united in one church. The closing chapters of the epistle (12-16) are hortatory and practical.

IV

THE MESSAGE TO THE ROMANS

1. *Introduction and Theme* (1 : 1-17)

Salutation: Paul's call to preach the glorious gospel (1 : 1-7)

I, Paul, address you Romans as one under obligation to do the will of Christ, commissioned by a divine call and set apart to the work of spreading the gospel which God has given to man—a message whose truths were heralded in advance by divinely inspired men in writings which, by reason of their origin and contents, are sacred, because they bear witness to the Messiah, who was, indeed, in his earthly manifestation, a descendant of David, but who, in his spiritual and essential life, was proven to be God's Son by a glorious act of power, even an act of resurrection. Such is the divine attestation of Jesus, who has applied God's grace to me and made me a messenger to secure,

for his glory among the heathen peoples—to whom you Christian Romans also belong—that obedience which springs from faith, and so, since you fall within the scope of my apostolate, I write you with salutations of grace and peace.

Thanksgiving for their growth and progress (1 : 8-15)

Let the first theme of my letter be the gratitude which I feel for your growth and progress in the Christian life, which is evidenced by your reputation for faithfulness in the whole Christian world. I may thus speak of my feeling of gratitude, for I solemnly avow that it is confirmed and illustrated by my constant prayer that God will grant me the opportunity to visit you—an opportunity which I seek because of an eager desire to confirm you in the Christian life, or, rather, that both you and I might together receive new strength from the reciprocal influences upon one another of the faith which we both alike cherish. Nor has this desire to visit you been a mere desire with me; I have often formed a fixed purpose to carry it into effect (but have thus far been providentially prevented from so doing)—the end I have in view being to extend the work of the gospel at Rome as I have done and am doing in other Gentile communities. This purpose to visit you was thus in line with my mission to fulfil my divinely imposed obligation to the heathen, regardless of nationality or condition. Hence my readiness

Theme of the epistle (1 : 16, 17)

to come and work among you—a readiness which I boldly profess, for I confidently glory and trust in the gospel as

God's effective means of saving from sin everyone who believes on Christ, whether Jew or heathen (though I do not forget the order of precedence which has been providentially accorded the Jew in receiving the glad tidings). The gospel, I say, can save men, for in it a way is revealed in which sinful men may be accepted before God and may stand in his presence approved and forgiven. Faith is the condition—the procuring cause, on the human side, of this acceptance—and also its result; that is, the attainment of this standing of acceptance with God is a matter of faith throughout, as the Old Testament itself has already intimated.

2. *Mankind Tends not to Righteousness, but to Evil* (1 : 18-32)

All mankind has a knowledge of God (1 : 18-23)

Apart from faith, it is God's wrath (rather than his righteousness) which awaits those who, by the practice of sin, prevent the truth which they do possess from ruling their lives. For a knowledge of God is possessed by men universally. The evidence that God has made himself known to them is found in the fact that they have had, in all periods of the world's history, through reflection upon the works of God, an idea of divine majesty—a fact which renders them guilty for the consequences of a neglect of that knowledge. It was because the heathen sinned against divinely given light, and became irreverent, ungrateful, and wickedly foolish in their thoughts of the

The deliberate rejection of this knowledge has led the heathen world to brutish idolatry (1 : 21-23)

divinity, that the moral degradation which they are experiencing came upon them. They gave themselves up to the follies and perversions of idolatry, and degraded the idea of God to the level of mere creature-life.

And to complete moral degradation (1 : 24-32)

In consequence of this, God punished them by plunging them, through the operation of moral laws, into that degradation in which they now live and in which their lives are characterized by the most revolting and unnatural vices, instead of by supreme reverence for God, to whom be eternal praise!

To such a life, I say, did God give them over—a life in which the relations of the sexes were basely disregarded and perverted, and the dire consequences of such vice realized. And so, as they *cast out* God from their mind, he gave them in return an *outcast*[1] mind which led into every namable sin those men who, all the while, knew that in accordance with God's just decree such action leads to moral death, and yet were not only themselves guilty of it, but have reached the deeper depth of actually justifying and approving it.

3. *The Jews Cannot be Saved by Good Works* (2 : 1 to 3 : 20)

Since the picture which I have just drawn of the sinfulness of the heathen world is true of mankind universally,

[1] By this clumsy play upon words I have attempted to represent the paronomasia of the apostle: οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν . . . ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, κ. τ. λ.

any one of you who condemns the Gentile must, in so doing, condemn himself, for he is guilty of the same sins. I say that all are guilty before God because it is certain that he must condemn such conduct as I have described (and it is universal among men). Can one of you who passes the false judgment that he is free from the guilt of such sin while yet committing it, suppose that he will be exempt from God's true judgment? Or, not to speak of judgment, will you by such pride and folly show that you have no appreciation of God's gracious treatment which would lead you to salvation, and will you go on accumulating guilt until the final and terrible judgment day? —a day when God will render just awards to all men: eternal life to those who have been faithful and obedient to him; condemnation upon the factious and unrighteous— the penalties of his wrath upon the one, the blessings of his favor upon the other—awards in the administration of which God has regard to the degree of light and privilege which men have neglected, so that a severer condemnation awaits the Jew than the Gentile. I said that God's judgment of men would be a just one, for he is not partial to one division of mankind as against another, for it is sin which he will punish, whether committed by the Gentile, who has but the light of nature and conscience to guide him, or by the Jew, who possesses the fuller knowledge of duty which the Mosaic law imparts. The Jews who have not kept the law cannot be saved by its mere possession,

The Jews guilty of the same sinfulness as the Gentiles (2 : 1-5)

Their condemnation all the more certain (2 : 6-11)

Salvation conditioned on obedience (2 : 12-16)

for it is not the knowledge of what God requires, but the performance of it, which he accepts. The Gentiles have just as much prospect of salvation by works as the Jews, but neither can be saved thus, for the moral perceptions of right and duty which the heathen often exhibit show that they have a moral law within them and are amenable to the principle: Doers of law shall be justified; and since neither Jews nor Gentiles are "doers" in the sense required, that of perfect obedience, they both alike have failed to sustain the test. On the plane of law, then, there is one principle for all: Justification for those only who fully meet the divine requirements; punishment for such as do not. This will be the law of the future judgment for all such as do not avail themselves of the provisions of God's grace by repentance and faith.

The special advantages of the Jews only increase their guilt for neglecting them (2 : 17-29)

What though you bear the theocratic name of Jew, and rest in secure confidence of divine favor, and possess the knowledge of God and duty which the Old Testament furnishes, and regard yourself as a spiritual superior among men? What does all this signify if you fail to justify those claims, and, by immoral life, forfeit the benefits of your knowledge? Do you not commit the very sin which you denounce, and so cause the heathen to despise the God whom you pretend to worship? It is, indeed, a fortunate thing to be a Jew and to enjoy the advantages which God has afforded him; but if these are not put to the uses of a good life by the Jew, he becomes no better

than a heathen. Indeed, if a heathen should, with his feebler light, do the deeds which your law requires, and which you yourselves fail to do, he would show himself to be more truly God's servant than you, and would meet with more favor at the judgment. For it is not the practice of rites, nor the possession of principles, but inward purity of life, which proves one to belong to the true people of God.

The Jews have the advantage of a recorded revelation (3 : 1-2)

If, then, Jew and Gentile may thus exchange places in God's estimation, does anything remain of the Jew's boasted advantage? Yes, much remains, in whatever point viewed; and, first, his possession of the revelation through the Old Testament. I say this advantage remains, for, even if the objection be made that many of the Jews have not accepted the Messiah, and so have been false to this same Old Testament revelation, yet God's faithful performance of the promises which he made to his people is not thereby precluded. Let us remember that, though all men be false, God is true. It would seem, then, that human faithlessness is not only consistent with God's faithfulness, but rather exhibits it in clearer light. Is man, then, to blame? Is his unbelief not (humanly speaking) rather commendable? No, for on such a principle there could be no just judgment of the world, since it confuses all moral distinctions. If, then, I, by my falseness, become a means of eliciting and magnifying the fidelity and truthfulness of God, can my falseness, which serves so good an end, be

Their unbelief wholly unjustifiable (3 : 3-8)

regarded as sinful? But carry the argument a step farther. Must not this lead to the principle: Increase falseness that God may be shown to be true; promote disobedience that God's faithfulness may more plainly appear; that is, "Do evil that good may come"? I am wickedly charged with such teaching. Those who do maintain such principles are under a just condemnation. What, then, is the general conclusion of the whole argument? Have we Jews any advantage over the Gentiles in respect to the prospect of salvation by works? None at all, for both classes have been proven to be, by reason of their sinfulness, without hope of such salvation, a conclusion which the Old Testament picture of human depravity confirms.

All mankind, in fact, is guilty in God's sight (3 : 9-18)

And this testimony must be true of the Jews, since it is found in the very Scriptures which God gave especially to them. All, then, are guilty. None can be saved by obeying law; the less so because the law only intensifies the power of sin, instead of delivering man from it.

The Old Testament confirms the conclusion: no salvation by works (3 : 19, 20)

4. *The True Way of Salvation—that of Faith* (3 : 21-31)

We have seen that in the line of legal works there is no possibility of attaining acceptance with God. But there is another way of securing it—the very way which the Old Testament teaches—that is, by an act of trust in God's mercy as now revealed in Christ, and this way is open to

The Old Testament reveals another method of attaining salvation—that of faith (3 : 21-22)

all, without distinction of race or privilege. For just as all men have, by sin, closed the path of salvation by merit, so to all is open on equal terms the way of a gracious salvation which is brought to man through that work of Christ by which he has purchased men's release from sin. This liberation was accomplished by God so manifesting, in the death of Christ, his holy displeasure against sin that he thereby dispelled the appearance of being indifferent to evil (which was occasioned by his lenient treatment of sinners in pre-Christian times), and showed that, in forgiving the sinner who should trust in Christ, he was not acting inconsistently with the requirements of holiness. Since salvation is secured only by the renunciation of all meritorious deeds, none may allege his rights or privileges as constituting a valid claim upon God. The law-principle of salvation may encourage, but the faith-principle excludes, such presumption. For man is justified by faith, which involves the renunciation of merit, whether his previous obedience to the requirements of the law has been more or less complete. In the light of this principle we see the universality of Christianity. All stand on the same plane before God; none may claim salvation; all may receive it on the same gracious terms. God's uniform requirement is faith; he will accept all men on this one simple condition. Do we then set the law (whose efficacy as a means of salvation we deny) and faith (whose efficacy we affirm)

Opened unto all by Christ (3 : 23-25)

Inferences from this fact (3 : 26-31)

in opposition? No. The law itself confirms the very principles of faith which we maintain.

5. *The Old Testament Proof of Justification by Faith* (4)

The Old Testament represents Abraham as being saved by faith, not by works (4 : 1-5)

In accord with the statement that in my doctrine of justification I confirm the law, and as an illustration of it, what do we find that our ancestor Abraham attained? Did he secure any meritorious claim upon God? For if he was justified by works he might make such a claim, but this supposition is really out of the question, for while his life may be honorable before men, it could furnish no ground of merit before God. For all personal merit even in his case is excluded by the scriptural statement that it was his faith, not his works, which God accepted, and on account of which he pronounced him righteous. Now in the matter of legal obedience, not grace, but debt, is the principle of award. But where there is no claim to perfect obedience, but, instead, a spirit of trust in God, it is that trust which God accepts. This thought of a gracious treatment of man by God—a treatment better than he deserves—finds expression in the Psalm where David pronounces the man happy against whom the Lord does not reckon up the whole sum of his sins, but graciously hides them with his forgiving mercy. In accordance with the truth that righteousness is attained, not in the line of works, but of faith, is not the blessing of justification open to all, irrespective of cir-

The same principle of gracious salvation recognized in the Psalms (4 : 6-8)

cumcision? Yes, for the Scripture, in narrating Abraham's justification, speaks, not of circumcision, but only of faith. That justification takes place without regard to circumcision is also evident from the fact that Abraham was not yet circumcised when he was justified. Circumcision followed faith as its sign, and was therefore secondary and dependent upon it. Its chief meaning, therefore, was to bear testimony to Abraham as the man of faith, irrespective of circumcision. Therefore Abraham's religious significance is connected primarily with his faith and not with his circumcision. Hence it is not Jews as such, but believers, whatever their nationality, who are best entitled to claim to be his spiritual sons. For his religious pre-eminence was not won by legal works, but rests upon God's gracious acceptance of his faith. Essentially the same must be true of all real followers of Abraham, for if they won their reward by works, the principle of grace would be nullified, because the law brings, not righteousness, but wrath, through its intensification of the power of sin. Its immediate effect is therefore directly against man's salvation, for when it appears, transgression and a consequent consciousness of sin which forbodes punishment inevitably follow. Since the law makes us objects of the divine displeasure rather than subjects of salvation, the inheritance of the blessings promised to Abraham must be entered upon by faith, the condition which corresponds to the grace which bestows them.

Circumcision followed this recognition of Abraham's faith (4 : 9-12)

Believers are the spiritual children of Abraham and must be justified by faith as he was (4 : 13-25)

Thus it is seen how Abraham (of whose numerous descendants the Scripture speaks) stands as the prototype of all believers before God, in whose boundless power he so implicitly believed. This faith of his which remained confident in the face of all human improbability of its realization was what enabled God to make Abraham the spiritual father of mankind—this unwavering confidence, I say, is what God graciously accepted for righteousness. Now the narrative of Abraham's justification in Genesis has its chief value not as the history of an individual, but because it is typical of all God's dealings and illustrates the principles upon which he always proceeds. The narrative contains the truths which apply to us who are believers in Christ as the divinely appointed Mediator of salvation.

6. *Praise of God's Saving Grace* (5)

Justification by faith brings peace and a confident hope (5 : 1-8)

The consequences of justification are, first, a sense of security in our relations to God, which we have obtained through Christ, who has introduced us into this new position of acceptance with God; next, a joyous hope of future blessedness; then, the ability to be glad even when beset by trials and hardships, because we understand that these conditions develop moral perseverance, and this, well-tested Christian character. Moreover, the reason why this hope of future good does not disappoint us is that the realization of God's love to us assures us of its

fulfilment. What is the guarantee of this love and of the hope founded upon it? It is found in Christ's giving himself up to death for us in our moral impotence—an act of sacrifice which could only spring from a greater love than is known among men. Thus the greatness of the divine love is seen in the fact that those for whom Christ died were not the obedient and faithful, but the sinful, who were the objects of God's holy displeasure.

The assurance that salvation will be completed (5 : 9-11)

If, now, we know that the divine love went out thus toward sinners, how much easier it is to believe that the beginning of our salvation will be fulfilled in its completion. For, to repeat the argument, if God began the work of our salvation when we were the objects of his wrath; if his love was great enough for that, how much more certain is it that, now that we have been acquitted of our guilt, we shall come to our complete life in Christ? How justly, then, may we rejoice in that divine love which has removed all obstacles to our acceptance with God, and made it possible for us to be at peace with him!

God's grace in Christ more than a match for the power of sin (5 : 12-21)

In view of the truths which have been established, we may compare Christ, his work, and its result, salvation, with Adam, his fatal transgression, and its consequence, physical death, which became the portion of all because his sin involved as its result the sinning of all his descendants. I affirm this relation between sin and death on the ground that even before the law came in to condemn sin and to stamp it as transgression, all were falling

a prey to death. Even those who lived during this period and had, unlike Adam, no explicit, positive command which they could break, continued to die. [But, before we carry out the comparison between Adam and his work, and Christ and his work, let us note certain differences. The favor of God revealed in Christ is more than a match for the sin which began with Adam and spread itself over all mankind. Man's condemnation issued from one trespass, but God's restoring grace has more power than many trespasses even, since it saves man from the power of many. We may be sure of this because it is more easily conceivable and more certain that those who received God's gift in Christ will triumph over sin than that all should have become involved in death in consequence of Adam's trespass] So then—as we began to say—as by Adam's sin all became involved in death, by Christ's work of righteous obedience is acceptance with God opened to all, for the two cases are parallel. Christ is the second Adam, come to restore to God's favor those who as descendants of the first Adam are lost to it. Now the Old Testament system, whose saving function I deny, had just the purpose to bring out this indwelling sin into its greatest strength, so that the case of man was rendered even more hopeless than before; but the love of God revealed in Christ is able to overcome this power of sin even when thus intensified by the law, and to bring man back to divine favor and assure him of eternal bliss.

7. *The Refutation of Objections and False Inferences* (6, 7)

(1) *This Doctrine of Salvation gives no Warrant to Moral License* (6 : 1-14)

The baptized Christian cannot continue to sin (6 : 1-4)

Shall we, from the fact that where the law brought out human sinfulness in its full force God's grace appeared in even greater power—shall we from this fact conclude that sin is a good thing, because it evokes God's grace? Such a conclusion is opposed by the very nature of the Christian life. How can those who have broken off, as by a death, all relation to the old sinful life, seek to justify any further connection with it? Our baptism expressed that entrance into personal life-fellowship with Christ whose deepest meaning is: participation in the benefits of his sin-atoning, sin-destroying death. This participation involves an ethical dying with Christ on his cross—a complete breaking off of relations with the old, sinful life—and a burial into moral death; that is, a permanent separation from the sinful world in which we formerly lived, in order that a new life in a new world of motive and action might be begun—a life as different from the former one as was Christ's life after his resurrection from what it was before.

His life must be in unison with Christ and therefore holy (6 : 5-11)

I may thus emphasize the fact that the negative process called "death" and "burial" to sin implies also the positive process called "resurrection" to holiness, for if we experience that moral process which is the analogue of Christ's death, that is, separation from the old life, we

must also experience its counterpart, the analogue of Christ's resurrection, that is, a renewed and purified moral life. Our old sinful self has been put to death; the body, where sin so manifested its power, has been subdued. Such a death means separation from sin. And if it means separation from sin through union with Christ, it must also mean a new life of holiness through union with him. Christ in his death broke off all relations to sin, never again to enter into them, and at his resurrection entered a life belonging wholly to God. So should the Christian consider his regeneration which is typified by his baptism as demanding at once the cessation of the sinful life and the beginning and continuance of the holy life. I exhort you, therefore, not to permit sin to control your bodies and their passions as it formerly did, but to subject your bodily powers to the uses of righteousness as the nature of your Christian profession demands. You must not permit sin to dominate your lives, and you need not, for you are not under the law-system, which always tends to intensify the bondage of men under sin, but under God's system of grace, in which is disclosed a way of deliverance from sin's guilt and power.

Not sin but righteousness must rule it (6 : 12-14)

(2) *Freedom from the Law not Freedom to Break it* (6 : 15 to 7 : 6)

Christian freedom is not freedom to sin (6 : 15)

From the fact that we Christians are not under the Old Testament law, but under God's grace in the gospel, shall we conclude that we are free to break the divine law by

sin? By no means. In refuting such an inference let us start from the position that a man is the servant of whatever he obeys. If a man obeys sin he is sin's servant; if he obeys righteousness, then he is bound to fulfil the demands of righteousness. Now this latter is your case. Your obedience and service to sin are things of the past. You have committed yourselves to my teaching, which enforces the demands of righteousness upon every life. When you thus broke away from bondage to sin, you entered a bondage to righteousness, thereby obligating yourselves to obey its requirements. I am applying to these high spiritual truths terms derived from human relations so as to make the contrast between the characteristic of the old life and that of the new plain to the most undiscerning. And I apply this truth thus: just as you used to allow your bodily powers to be dominated by sin, so you should now, as Christians, make them the means of serving and promoting holiness of life. For (to repeat my distinction between the two kinds of life) in your old life you were freemen in respect of righteousness, and bondmen in respect of sin; the opposite is now true; you are now free from sin and bound to righteousness. But looking away from the principle to the consequences of the old sinful life, what reward did it bring? Only a fruitage of which you are ashamed, for all its results are in the line of that final issue, moral death. But the opposite of all this is your case now. Being freemen in relation to sin and

The Christian is bound to be righteous (6 : 16-20)

Such action makes for holiness and eternal life (6 : 21-23)

bondmen in relation to God, you have holiness and everlasting life as your portion. So diverse are the outcomes in the two cases. The just desert of the former is death; the gracious gift which, in the case of the latter, God bestows, is eternal life through the gracious work of Jesus Christ.

Christians have broken with the Old Testament system as if by a death (7 : 1-6)

Those who, like you Romans, are acquainted with law, will at once recognize the truth of the principle that the law ceases to have dominion over the man at the man's death. The relation between the person and the law is sundered by death. We see an illustration and proof in the fact that when a husband dies the wife is then free to marry another man. The marriage bond is dissolved by death. Previous to the death of one of the parties the other is not free to contract another marriage; to do so would be adultery. In like manner—applying this principle to spiritual relations—the bondage of you Christians to the Old Testament law was broken by a death—the moral death to sin of one of the parties (that is, yourselves). You were under the law as your master, but are now under Christ, just as the woman whose first husband has died, comes under the authority of another whom she is then free to marry. Our former situation under the law was one of bondage under a hard master, sin, with which the law allied itself to enslave us. But now we are freed from that master by a moral death, in order that we may freely and gladly serve our new master, Christ, not from outward constraint, but from a glad inward impulse.

(3) *The Law Merely a Useful Instrumentality* (7 : 7-25)

Does it follow from my apparent depreciation of the law that it is evil? No; it is not itself evil, but only the occasion of developing, by the reaction which it provokes on the part of indwelling sin, the evil in men into expression. Without law men are comparatively unaware of their inherent wickedness, but when law comes with its demands and ideals they are seen to have utterly failed to meet its requirements, and thus its immediate effect is rather to conduct them to condemnation than to the holiness of life which the law, in itself considered, contemplates. Sin, not law, is the cause of this condemnation. The law is an instrument which sin uses for its purpose, but is in itself holy. The moral destruction which I speak of is wrought by sin which dwells in the flesh. It is against this overmastering foe that the good desires and aspirations which survive in the unregenerate man contend, but contend in vain. My efforts to keep the law are rendered unavailing by the power of sin, which that very law calls out into greater strength. I am no more my true, my would-be self, but sin so rules my life that I am powerless to realize my best desires. Two laws or forces contend within me —sin, which allies the law with itself, and my reason; in other words, the flesh, the evil propensities and passions, and my deeper, truer, moral feelings and desires. In this conflict the evil power is completely victorious, so that I am rendered a hopeless slave of sin. Whence shall re-

The law reveals the sinfulness of sin (7 : 7-13)

It cannot enable me to conquer sinful impulses (7 : 14-23)

Only Christ can deliver (7 : 24, 25)

lease come? I well know now that it comes alone from Christ. Such is the inner conflict in the life that aspires after goodness; such the despair to which it is driven in its oft-baffled strivings, and such the release which Christ affords.

8. *The Blessedness of being Justified* (8)

Union with Christ destroys the power of sin (8 : 1-4)

The state of the Christian is thus the very opposite of that which I have just described. The verdict of the law is not out against him, because he has been delivered from that condemnation which the law pronounces, and from the sin which occasioned the condemnation, by the power of the Spirit, which entered his life in consequence of his union with Christ. The law could not free him from its own curse, but could only reaffirm its adverse verdict, not because of any defect in the law, but because of the power of sin, which perpetually exposed the man to the law's condemnation. But Christ, whom God sent into the world to share our nature, apart from its sinfulness, has accomplished this deliverance, so that a way is opened for the fulfilment of the law's just requirements. This result is attained by establishing in man the inner dominion of the Spirit, which overthrows that of the flesh and determines all the aspirations and conduct of the man toward a holy, spiritual life, instead of toward the moral death to which it was formerly tending. Thus the man is brought into real harmony with God—for only through

This life of the Spirit assures peace and immortality (8 : 5-11)

the rule of the Spirit in us can the old enmity to God which sin occasioned be removed. The possession of Christ's Spirit alone proclaims us truly his. If we possess that Spirit, we have the guarantee of an imperishable life. The body must indeed die in consequence of the curse which human sin brings with it, but this death cannot affect the spirit of the man who has participated in Christ's salvation. If we possess the life-giving Spirit of God, he will grant us a future life and resurrection through the power of that indwelling Spirit.

It is best defined as sonship and heirship to God (8 : 12-17)

Since the Spirit is the determining element of the Christian life, we Christians are bound to follow his guidance. Only that life which he inspires is worthy to be called life. The carnal life is death, and the death of the carnal impulses is life. It is through following the impulses of the Spirit that we prove ourselves God's sons. When we became Christians we did not enter a servile condition similar to that in which we were under the law, but we entered a filial relation in which we can address God as our Father. And the inner testimony of the Spirit in our hearts assures and confirms this relation. If we are God's children, then of course we inherit the great blessings of his kingdom. This we do, however, only because we are joined with Christ and share the sufferings which faithful service to him may entail. At present the Christian must suffer for Christ's sake, but how much will the future glory of the Messianic kingdom outweigh such suffering!

Any present suffering is preparatory to a greater glory (8 : 18-22)

Of this coming blessedness we find everywhere an eager expectation. Even inanimate nature seems to be awaiting it. The reason is that God, in subjecting nature to the law of decay and death, mingled an element of hope with this condition, which leads her to expect deliverance from this law and participation in the freedom from sin's curse which awaits God's children. Such a prospect for nature seems suggested by the condition of eager yearning and intense dissatisfaction which she shows with her present condition. But not only do we see this yearning for deliverance from sin's consequences on the part of nature; even Christians, who have been acquitted of their sins and have become obedient children of God, are subject to this condition of perishableness which has been impressed upon nature. They, too, must die, and they naturally await with hope their future deliverance from the reign of sickness and death; that is, the bestowment of an imperishable embodiment for the soul. I say "with hope," for this element is mingled with all our experience of salvation. We have not yet enjoyed its full fruition. Our incomplete emancipation from the law of decay and death leaves us this great boon to expect in the heavenly world.

The Christian is ever expectant (8 : 23-25)

All the resources of God's grace pledged to the Christian (8 : 26-30)

Not only does the hope just described inspire us, but the Holy Spirit aids us in our weakness and in our prayers by his all-prevailing intercessions. Since this intercession is accordant with God's will, he alone knows its full significance and power. But there is one thing which we

do know; that is, that all events co-operate to secure the final good of believers; because we were from the beginning included in God's foreknowledge and purpose, and thus our standing as Christians has the whole plan of God to support it. The realization of our salvation in the past and in the future but fulfils the gracious plan of God for our lives.

The blessed security of future salvation (8 : 31-39)

The practical conclusion is, that God's purpose of grace is pledged to us. God, who provided for our salvation in the great gift of his Son, will not withhold from us any lesser benefit. None can bring a charge against God's chosen ones, since God himself has acquitted them. None may condemn them, since Christ died, rose, and intercedes for them. There is no hardship or suffering, not even death—no, nor any power whatsoever in all the universe, which can separate us from the love which Christ has for us.

9. *God's Providential Dealing with the Jewish Nation* (9 : 1-29)

The sad failure of Israel to accept the Messiah (9 : 1-5)

How deep is my interest in my countrymen, and how deeply I lament their rejection of the Messiah is evidenced by my willingness to perish if thereby I might save them. Their lapse seems the more sad in view of their great privileges and advantages as the theocratic people, chief of which is the descent of Christ from Jewish ancestry on his human side, while, in the depths of his being, he par-

This failure not inconsistent with the Divine promises (9 : 6-13)

takes of the nature of the blessed Deity. But the unbelief of my people will not involve the failure of God's promise. If we look back at our history we perceive that there has been a selective process going on; not all members of the nation proved themselves true children of God. We see this in the case of the two sons of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, and their descendants. Only one of these lines proved faithful to God; yet God's promise to his people was not thereby annulled. Another example is found in the two lines which are descended from Isaac, that of Esau and that of Jacob. The fact that God made choice of the latter rather than of the former shows that Jacob was not chosen for any merit of his own.

God's freedom and wisdom in dealing with the nation not to be called in question (9 : 14-18)

Because God chooses one and rejects another, shall we conclude that he is unjust? No; for in the law he claims that prerogative. His choice of any is based, not upon their merits or strivings, but upon his own sovereign mercy. An example of this absoluteness of God's action is seen in his dealing with the Pharaoh. The Old Testament says that God brought him upon the field of history in order to exhibit his power upon him. This example also shows that God extends his mercy to men or hardens them in sin according to his good pleasure.

God's providential action sovereign and free (9 : 19-29)

But this view will provoke the objection: If a man, in pursuing a sinful course, is but fulfilling the divine will, how can God attach guilt to his action? The question is presumptuous. Man is quite incompetent thus to

judge the procedure of God. Men are like clay in the hands of the potter. Can the clay complain if the potter makes from the same lump vessels for noble and vessels for ignoble use? So if God, while wishing, on the one hand, to exhibit his justice in the punishment of some men for whom this penalty had been determined, yet, out of compassion, withheld its execution for a time, who has a right to complain (either of the long suffering or of the determination to destroy)? and if, further, it was his purpose to exhibit, during this period of forbearance, his sav. ing mercy on some whom he had chosen for this end—whether Jews or Gentiles—who has the right to complain? The Old Testament speaks of such acts of God as being wholly independent of all claims or merits on man's part, as, for example, in the call of the Gentiles, and in the preservation of a remnant in Israel.

10. *The Jews' Responsibility for their Rejection* (9 : 30 to 10 : 21)

They have sought salvation by meritorious deeds (9 : 30-32)

Since God's action is never based upon human merit, and since he always acts justly, what must we conclude is the reason, on the Jews' side, of their rejection and of the Gentiles' acceptance? It is that while the Jews were striving to establish their own righteousness by works, the Gentiles have accepted the righteousness which is offered through the gospel on condition of faith. As of old, Israel found the divine word the occasion of their

overthrow and calamity, because of their disobedience to God, so do they now again stumble over the truth that faith is that which God requires.

They have real but misdirected zeal (10 : 1-5)

How earnestly do I yearn for the salvation of my people, and well I may, for they still have much interest in their ancestral religion, but how mixed with misconception of its real principles and demands! From this misconception proceeds this futile effort to win salvation by merit instead of accepting that which God graciously offers. There can be no thought of the law as the means of salvation now that Christ has come; and, indeed, it was never actually a means of salvation, because its requirement was perfect obedience; it could not save without that, and that was always wanting. The faith-principle is quite different. It sets before us no impracticable task. It only asks us to accept the divine promise and truth which are close at hand; it demands only that we lean in faith upon Christ. Resting in him and confessing him as Saviour, we shall have security and peace. This is a truth of universal application. Its promise of salvation is as wide as the race. All may accept it. Nor can the Jews justly say that this way of grace was not known to them, and so excuse themselves.

The easy conditions of faith they have deliberately rejected (10 : 6-15)

Let us examine this justification of disobedience. Have they not had abundant opportunity to learn these truths of grace and faith which pervade their own Scriptures as the light of the sun pervades the world? Already,

in Moses and the prophets, we find allusions both to the extension of the true religion to the heathen and to the hardness of the chosen people. Thus the truths which I now teach and the reasons for them are not new, but old, and should have been understood and appreciated by the Jewish people.

Their own Scriptures would have taught them the right way (10 : 16-21)

11. *The Restoration of the Nation* (11)

That God has not utterly cast off the Jewish people from his favor I am myself a living evidence. Remember that, as in former times, when the nation seemed lost in idolatry and sin, a remnant was still left who remained true to God, just so now there is, in accordance with the provisions of God's grace, a faithful few. The majority, seeking to uphold their own self-righteousness, have fallen a prey to moral hardening, but some have accepted the terms of God's gracious salvation. To the others we might apply the Old Testament language in which the prophets describe the obduracy of the faithless. But even the lapse of the nation as a whole will not be permanent. By rejecting the Messiah they have occasioned his earlier and fuller proclamation to the heathen, who, by accepting him, will prove to the Jews what they have lost by not so doing. The Jews will thus be stimulated, by the example of the Gentiles and by the blessings which the heathen will be seen to enjoy, to accept Christ also. If a benefit resulted to the Gentiles from

Israel's unbelief, now as in the past, is but partial (11 : 1-10)

It has made possible the conversion of the Gentiles (11 : 11-15)

the Jews' lapse, how much greater a blessing will flow from the recovery of the Jews to the Messianic kingdom which the conversion of the heathen will facilitate! I am writing to a Gentile Church. As the messenger of the gospel to Gentiles, it will be seen that I am acting within the true scope of my office in pointing out the bearing of the Jews' fall upon the heathen world. Certainly, if God could thus overrule their fall for good, he surely could make their conversion a yet greater good, and this is that for which I hope, for the nation is still holy unto God—his peculiar possession.

Israel's natural holiness facilitates restoration to God (11 : 16-24)

But you Gentiles, whose entrance into the Messianic kingdom the fall of the Jews has facilitated, should not conclude that this was due to some merit of yours and so fall into pride and boasting over the Jews. Remember that the ancient theocracy is still the basis of the Messianic kingdom. Do not therefore imagine that it was favoritism on God's part for you which led him to reject the Jews in order to receive you. He will as readily reject you if you, like the Jews, become unfaithful to him. Be humble, then, and beware lest you repeat their sad history.

In these dispensations we behold at once God's leniency and his severity; to those who have been true to him he has been very gracious; with the disobedient he has been severe. If now he would graciously receive you Gentiles upon faith, how much more will he take back into his

favor his peculiar people when they shall forsake their disobedience!

Consider well these providential dispensations, nor presume to criticise or explain them. In God's wisdom, a partial and temporary fall of Israel has been permitted, but, at last, the nation as a whole shall be saved and the hopes of future good which her prophets express be realized. The displeasure of God at the Jews inured to your benefit, but for the sake of the founders of the nation his ancient people shall still be the object of God's favor. God's purpose in the choice of the nation shall not finally miscarry, for as the Jews' lapse occasioned your speedier reception, so shall the divine favor bestowed upon you be the means, in turn, of hastening their recovery. God's purpose in the hardening and rejection of both classes (Jews and Gentiles) is subordinate to his purpose to make both the object of his mercy.

Gentile and Jew shall yet be united in one church (11 : 25-32)

How profound are these mysteries of God's providence and government! We cannot explain them. No man can penetrate his secrets, as the Scriptures say, for he is himself at once the source, the means, and the end of all things; as such let us render him all praise!

A glorious exhibition of Divine wisdom (11 : 33-36)

12. *The Life of Consecration to God's Service* (12)

By appeal to God's goodness to you, brethren, I urge you to consecrate yourselves, body and mind, to his service—the true, real spiritual service of the heart—so that

Its standard the will of God (12 : 1, 2)

Its fruitage a contented and earnest spirit (12 : 3-8)

you may prove in experience the blessedness of doing his holy will. This service you can only accomplish in the spirit of humility and soberness, which is inspired and regulated by faith. We have various gifts of faith, as the different parts of the body have various functions; let us exercise them all with fidelity, remembering that unless we are guided by trust in Christ in so doing, we shall fall into self-righteousness and vanity. Let us diligently practise the various Christian virtues, of which love is the chief, and whose highest exercise is seen in kindness, sympathy, and humility. This temper will prevent the spirit of revenge, and enable us to dwell peaceably with mankind. Remember that God will requite wrongs done; do not seek to forestall his judgment; treat foes with kindness; by so doing you will lead them to remorse and repentance and will conquer their malignity by love.

Maxims for its guidance (12 : 9-21)

13. *The Public Relations of the Christian* (13)

Obedience to the state a Christian duty (13 : 1-7)

We must obey the civil power, for it is a divinely ordained agency for the punishment of wrong-doing and for the commendation of well-doing. Only if we do evil have we anything to fear from the state. In that case we shall fall under its just and certain penalties. Therefore let us obey, not from fear only, but because obedience is right. The right of the state to obedience involves its right to levy taxes; render, therefore, to the different authorities the dues which they have a right to exact. Pay, I say, all

debts, except the debt of love. That is a perpetual obligation, since it is the essence of the whole divine law which never relaxes its demands upon us. To the duties of love I would, then, exhort you. The time of our redemption draws near; let us devote ourselves to deeds of goodness and not to works of vice.

Love a never-ending obligation (13 : 8-14)

14. *The Treatment of Conscientious Scruples* (14 : 1 to 15 : 13)

Receive to Christian fellowship such as have doubts and scruples as to certain courses of action—in themselves unessential—but not with a view to making such scruples objects of special attention and judgment. An example of such scruples is found in the case of one who refrains from eating meat. Let not him and the one who has no such scruple judge one another, since God accepts both. Both are Christ's servants, and it is his to approve or disapprove them. Another example is found in one who still holds by the Jewish sacred days. Both those who do this and those who do not are moved by conscientious convictions for the Lord's service. Let them not judge one another. So in general we must carefully regard the feelings and convictions of others. Whatever we do, we must do in the spirit of service to our Master, who both died and rose that he might be the Lord of us all. Why, then, judge one another? God alone is judge, all must bow to him, not to one another. Each must stand for himself

Forbearance the true basis of Christian fellowship (14 : 1-5)

Christ is our only judge (14 : 6-13)

before God's judgment—not that of other men. Whatever judgments, then, we pass in regard to our Christian brethren, let us by all means pass this one, that we ought not to hinder their religious life.

The rights of Christian liberty to be regulated by the obligations of Christian charity (14 : 14-23)

The man who has no such scruples as I have named is, no doubt, theoretically right. He has all the rights which he claims, but love may require him, in certain cases, to forego their exercise. Otherwise he may, by his failure to apply the Christian law of love, injure those whom Christ has so greatly loved as to die for them. Try to keep the Christian fame of your church without reproach, by avoiding all such disputes with their unhappy consequences, for religion does not consist in the maintenance, on either side, of such points of difference, but of an inner spiritual life. He who lives that life is approved of God ; therefore seek to promote harmony and to build up Christian character in others. Such rights as I have named yield to the higher obligations of Christian helpfulness ; cherish strong convictions of such rights, if you will, but do not try to impose them upon those who cannot admit or accept them. Fortunate, indeed, is the man who in such matters has no scruple as to the course which he decides to pursue, for, of course, those who are in doubt about their right to act as they do must be self-condemned, because they are not acting with the full consent of conscience, and one sins against his own moral nature when he does, in such cases, what his conscience is not clear in approving.

It accords with the spirit of Christ, as shown in his earthly life, to show a kindly and concessive feeling for the weak and hesitating. His was a life of reproach rather than of self-gratification. The picture of the suffering Messiah found in the Old Testament was given for our instruction, that we, steadfastly following his example and cultivating his spirit, might have the hope of future blessedness with him in his kingdom. May God give us a spirit of harmony, so that we may unitedly honor him. Be therefore considerate and helpful to one another, for Christ has made all, without distinction, the object of his love—the Jews, according to God's ancient promises, and the Gentiles, for his mercy's sake. Let all alike praise the Messiah, as the psalmist says ; let all acknowledge him as the true Davidic King of whom Isaiah prophesied, and may you all find peace in trusting him, and hope in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Christ's example of thoughtful love may give encouragement (15 : 1-13)

15. *The Apostle's Inspiring Mission* (15 : 14-33)

I am indeed confident of your sincerity, spirituality, and disposition to aid one another. It was that you might be even more perfect in this regard that I have in some expressions very frankly reminded you of your duty—in accordance with my commission to promote the gospel among the Gentiles. Let me not speak, however, of what I have done for you or others; Christ has rather done it through me by giving me strength and inspiration, ena-

Paul's desire to promote the Christian life of his readers the reason for writing the letter (15 : 14-21)

bling me to carry the gospel from its starting-point in Jerusalem to the remote province of Illyricum. In all this labor I made it a point of honor not to work where others were working, but to go to the outlying regions where the gospel had not yet been carried.

His desire to visit Rome (15 : 22-28)

The greatness of my task has prevented me from coming to Rome, but now that my work in the regions named is finished, I hope to realize my long-cherished desire to visit Rome. I want to travel by way of your city when I go to Spain. Meantime I must make a journey to Jerusalem to carry up thither the contribution of the Macedonian and Achaian churches to the poor members of the mother-church—a gift which fittingly recognizes the indebtedness of the Gentile churches to the primitive Jerusalem church for a knowledge of the gospel.

His request for their prayers (15 : 29-33)

I am confident that when I come I shall be provided with the power to help and strengthen you. Pray earnestly for me, that I may suffer no harm at the hands of the Judaizing opponents of the gospel in Judea ; that my mission thither may fully accomplish its end, and that, this done, I may come and find spiritual refreshment among you. Meantime and always may the divine presence, the true source of peace, be yours ![1]

[1] Chapter 16 consists so largely of personal references that it did not seem practicable to paraphrase it.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

I

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EPISTLES OF THE IMPRISONMENT

The four epistles next to be considered—Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians—compose the third group of Paul's letters and were written after he became a Roman prisoner. Some scholars refer the first three of these to his imprisonment at Cæsarea (see Acts 23 and 24). Among the reasons assigned is, that a Colossian runaway slave (Col. 4 : 9; Philem. 10 ff.) would more naturally and easily betake himself to Cæsarea than to the distant city of Rome, and that Paul's close personal relations with the Christians of Asia, disclosed in Colossians and Philemon, are more naturally explained, if he was still at the comparatively near city of Cæsarea. But the more common view is that all these letters were written during Paul's imprisonment at Rome (Acts 28). The narrative in Acts 23, 24, would not lead us to think that Paul was active as a preacher during his Cæsarean imprisonment, as these letters show him to have been during the period when they were composed. Moreover, at Cæsarea

he could hardly have had the hope of soon being liberated which he expresses in these epistles (*e.g.*, Philem. 22). In any case, Philippians was written from Rome, as the reference to the emperor's household (Phil. 4 : 22) quite decisively proves. If written at Rome they would probably fall within the years A.D. 62 and 63.

So far as these epistles are doctrinal they treat chiefly of the person and work of Christ. In the churches of Colossæ and vicinity a form of error was current which made it especially important for the apostle to set forth the true dignity and supremacy of the Saviour. It thus appears that these epistles mark a new stage in the work of Paul. In writing his great doctrinal letters, especially Galatians and Romans, it had been necessary for him to urge the true condition of salvation, namely, faith, in contrast to the Pharisaic principle of works of merit. Now he must hold aloft the true object of faith, namely, the supreme divine Saviour himself, in opposition to speculation which would degrade him and deny to him the eminence which belongs to him. Formerly the great question was : On what terms does God save men? Does he owe salvation to any because of what they have done, or does he bestow it as an unmerited favor upon condition of trust and self-surrender? Now the question is : What is the nature, the rank, the dignity of the Mediator of salvation? Is he one of a series of saviours? Does he belong to some angelic order, or, does he stand supreme and sol-

itary? Is he the Head and Chief of all creation? Other questions and interests occupied the apostle's mind in writing these letters, but this is the great burden of their doctrinal portions, especially of Colossians and Ephesians.

II

THE ERRORS COMBATED IN COLOSSIANS

The Colossian "heresy" was a mixture of Jewish and heathen elements. On its Jewish side it was akin to the tenets of the obscure and ascetic sect, the Essenes. On its heathen side it was kindred to a type of speculation which later became rife under the name of Gnosticism. The principal characteristics of the error were: a lowering of the dignity and saving power of Christ, the substitution of various ascetic abstinences and ritualistic practices for trust in him, the worship of angels and a revelling in dreams and visions. Let us briefly illustrate these points from the epistle itself. Evidently this false philosophy which was "after the tradition of men and the rudiments of the world" did not hold fast to Christ as Head (1 : 17; 2 : 19), or assign to him his true pre-eminence as the One in whom dwells all the fulness of Deity (1 : 19; 2 : 9). The false teachers enjoined such "precepts and doctrines of men" (2 : 22) as "Handle not, nor taste, nor touch" (2 : 21), abstinences which, says the apostle, "have no

value against the indulgence of the flesh" (2 : 23). They were characterized by an enforced and unnatural "humility" and "severity to the body," by a "worshipping of angels" and a fondness for brooding over the wonders which they thought they had seen in visions (2 : 18, 23). The result was that they were losing, and were weakening in others, the hold upon Christ as the sole and sufficient Saviour, the Son of God's love in whom men have their redemption, "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation" (1 : 15).

The aim of Paul in writing the letter has already been implied in what has been said; it was to combat and counteract the errors which have been described and to confirm the readers in Christian faith and life. The epistle abounds in earnest practical exhortations as well as in eloquent portrayals of Christ's supreme glory. There runs through it a vein of Paul's Christian mysticism. Its keynote is union with Christ: "for you died (to sin), and your life is hid with Christ in God" (3 : 3).

III

THE MESSAGE TO THE COLOSSIANS

1. *Salutation and Thanksgiving* (1 : 1-8)

Salutation (1 : 1, 2)

I, Paul, made an apostle of Christ by a divine call, and Timothy, our brother in the gospel, to the holy and faith-

ful Christians in Colossæ ; the favor and peace of God be with you.

Thanksgiving for their faith and brotherly love (1 : 3-8)

We render unceasing thanks to God for the report which we have heard concerning your steadfast devotion to Christ and your love to your fellow-Christians. These graces are inspired by that hope of the blessed life in heaven which was begotten in you by your earlier instruction in the gospel—that gospel which everywhere bears fruit in blessing, just as it has done in you ever since you received it. Such was the gospel taught you by our dear fellow-laborer, Epaphras, who has represented us among you, and who now brings us tidings of your Christian love.

2. *The Pre-eminence of Christ* (1 : 9-29)

An exhortation to progress in the knowledge of Christ (1 : 9-14)

Since we heard the joyful news of your faith and love, we have not ceased to pray that you may increase in the knowledge of God and in spiritual discernment so as to be able to do the divine will ; I pray that you may more and more apprehend God's truth and may be filled with the strength which his glorious power gives, which will enable you to bear all sufferings and hardships with cheerfulness, and to render praise to God, who has prepared us to share in his heavenly glory. He, indeed, rescued us from the bondage of moral darkness and made us citizens in the kingdom of his beloved Son, who procured our release from our former bondage ; he is the manifestation of the unseen God, the One who antedates all creation, by whose

The supremacy of Christ in the world and in the Church (1 : 15-20)

agency all beings and powers in heaven and earth were created ; and as he is the means, so also is he the goal of all things ; he exists before creation and he is the Power which sustains and holds together all things. And he who stands in this relation of priority and superiority to the universe sustains a similar relation to the church, which is his mystical body. As the Risen One, he is the source of its life ; thus in both the natural and the spiritual orders he is supreme. And this supremacy is his, because God willed that all the plenitude of Deity should reside in him, and that by his death he should abolish the discords of the universe and bring in harmony among all powers and beings, in earth and heaven. You Gentiles, who were by your former evil life estranged from God, are included in the terms of that great divine peacemaking ; by Christ's death you have been saved, that you might stand blameless before God in the judgment, if you remain firmly grounded in the truth of the gospel which was taught you—the same gospel which the apostles have spread far and wide and of which I was called to be a servant.

An appeal to the readers to continue constant in devotion to Christ (1 : 21-23)

3. *The Apostle's Efforts on Behalf of his Readers* (1 : 24 to 2 : 7)

Paul's labors and sufferings in the cause of Christ (1 : 24-29)

Sustained by such encouragements, I can glory in those hardships by which I am supplementing in my own person the sufferings which Christ endured for the sake of his spiritual body, the church, of which he made me a

steward, that I might perform for you Gentiles the service of dispensing to you God's abounding grace and publish the glorious divine mystery which had been kept a secret from the beginning, but now in these last days has been revealed to his people. This mystery, in all its fulness of blessing, God was pleased to make known in the calling of you Gentiles; namely, that Christ is also your Saviour. This Saviour we apostles preach to all men without distinction as their true Guide and Teacher. Our aim is that all may be complete in him. In order to further this aim, I discipline myself in self-denying toil, and put forth all the energy which Christ inspires within me.

The necessity of supreme loyalty to Christ (2 : 1-7)

Consider the greatness of my apostolic labors—my anxiety for you and for your Laodicean neighbors and for many others who have not seen me face to face. Constantly do I wrestle in spirit that they may be confirmed in faith and united in love, and may attain to full conviction and perfect understanding respecting that glorious mystery of God, which is Christ, who contains in himself all fulness of heavenly wisdom. Therefore I warn you against those who would persuade you with plausible arguments to give up your faith in him. For though I am personally absent from you, I am present with you in interest and sympathy and am glad to see the firm position which you take up against such persuasions, and the loyal trust in Christ which you display. Do not abandon him of whom you have learned, but remain constant in your devotion to

him, growing ever stronger in Christian truth and life and rejoicing in God's goodness to you.

4. *A Warning against Current Errors* (2 : 8-23)

The superiority of Christianity to these errors (2 : 8-15)

Beware lest you fall a prey and are made captive by the representatives of a shallow and pretentious "philosophy," based on human conceit and childish fancy, which degrades the person of Christ, for in him, in his glorified bodily form, dwells all the plenitude of Deity and in him you receive the fulness of your spiritual life, since he is the chief of all the angelic orders (of which your would-be teachers say so much). In him, too, you have the true spiritual circumcision, which means the abandonment of carnal appetites and passions. This spiritual renewal is expressed in your baptism, which signifies death to the old life and resurrection to the new life, through the grace of him who raised Christ from the dead. You Gentiles, who were spiritually dead in your sinfulness, even you has God raised up to life in Christ and has purged away your sins. The condemnation of the law which stood against us he has abolished, abrogating it by the death of Christ; like a conqueror he has despoiled all hostile powers of their armor, has put them to open shame, and led them captive in the triumph of Christ.

Since, then, you are freed from the bondage of the law, let no one bring you under the tyranny of its observances, which are but a shadow, of which Christ is the substance.

Let no one prevent you now from winning the Christian victory by inducing you to adopt a pretentious humility which expresses itself in the worship of angel-powers, in supposed visions and vaunted wisdom—a false religion which abandons Christ and destroys the true unity, and prevents the growth of the church over which he is supreme.

The folly of forced humility and angel worship (2 : 16-19)

You Christians have broken all relations with elementary religions as by a death ; why, then, do you citizens of heaven still long for the outward ordinances which are only fitted for the discipline of children, ascetic rules of abstinence from various meats and drinks (things which are material, perishable, and unimportant), precepts which have but a human authority? In such practices, with their forced devotion, their parade of humility, and ascetic rigor, there is only a pretence of superior knowledge; they are utterly useless as a check upon the power of sensual passion.

The folly of ascetic practices (2 : 20-23)

5. *The Christian Standards of Duty* (3 : 1 to 4 : 6)

Since now you have risen into a holy life with Christ, you should fix your thoughts upon that heavenly world of truth and reality in which Christ lives and reigns. On spiritual, not on material, interests should your hearts be set. For when you became Christians, you broke relations, as by death, with the old sinful life, and through Christ entered into a fellowship with God which the

The high and holy motives of the Christian life (3 : 1-4)

world does not know. But when Christ, the source of our spiritual life, shall be revealed in glory at his coming, then you, too, shall shine forth in your real nature as his redeemed ones.

Christianity inconsistent with a sinful life (3 : 5-11)

Since you have entered upon this new and holy life, you must forsake all that is inconsistent with it, all base desires and practices, and especially greed, the worship of riches. Such sins call down upon those who abandon themselves to them the judgment of heaven; in the power of them you lived before your conversion. But now that you have become Christians, you must forsake all malicious passion and all false and slanderous speech, for you have left the old evil life behind you, and have begun a new life whose nature it is to develop into an increasing knowledge and likeness to God—a life in which the old distinctions of race and social condition are annihilated and Christ is the sole bond of union and fellowship.

The virtues and spirit of the Christian (3 : 12-17)

Therefore you, as God's chosen people, must practise the virtues of gentleness, endurance, and forgiveness, bearing with one another and reconciling your differences in the spirit in which Christ has granted you his grace; and let all these virtues be embraced within the all-comprehending virtue of love which binds together and completes them all. And let your hearts be governed by the peace which Christ imparts and for whose realization in the unity of his church he has called you into the Christian life; and do not fail to be grateful. Let Christ's

truth enrich your hearts with its spiritual wisdom. Inspire one another by your common worship and praise, and let your thanksgiving be no mere outward service. Let all your life be religious—a service to Christ, a thank-offering to God.

His duty in social relations (3 : 18 to 4 : 1)

Christian duty requires that wives obey their husbands; that husbands cherish their wives and use no harshness with them; that children obey their parents, and that, in turn, parents vex not their children, lest they grow disheartened and sullen; also that slaves render to their masters cheerful and sincere service, and regard such service as a duty to Christ. Let each fill his place and faithfully do his work, considering it as a divinely given task, for the performance of which he will be duly rewarded by Christ at the judgment. On the other hand, he who injures another shall be requited therefor, and by an impartial tribunal. Therefore let masters see to it that they treat their bondmen with justice and equity, not forgetting that they, too, are servants of Christ, who holds them responsible.

Exhortations to prayerfulness and discretion (4 : 2-6)

Be earnest and alert in prayer and praise. Pray that God may open to me new opportunities to offer the gospel to men, for which I am now suffering imprisonment, that, as I ought, I may fearlessly proclaim it. Be discreet in your relations with unbelievers; let no opportunity for doing good escape you. Let your converse with others be tempered by pleasantness and wisdom, so that your

account of your life and doctrine may have a wholesome moral effect.

6. *Personal References* (4 : 7-18)

Commendation of Tychicus and Onesimus (4 : 7-9)

Tychicus, who has been my faithful helper in the gospel, will give you, when he delivers this letter, full tidings regarding me. Indeed, I have sent him to you that you may learn from him how I fare, and that by messages from me he might encourage you in the Christian life. With him will come our dear fellow-believer, Onesimus, who is himself a Colossian. They will tell you fully the state of matters here.

Christian greetings (4 : 10-17)

I send you greetings from Aristarchus, my companion in prison; from Mark, cousin to Barnabas (concerning whom I have already sent directions to welcome him heartily, if he pays you a visit), and from Jesus, surnamed Justus; all three Hebrew converts. These alone of the Jews have co-operated with me in Christian work and have supported me in my time of trial. Epaphras, your fellow-townsman, and a devoted Christian, also sends greetings. He is earnest in prayer that you may prove faithful and steadfast in the service of God. I bear testimony to his deep anxiety for your church and for those at Laodicea and Hieropolis. Greeting also from my dear friend, Luke, and from Demas. Greet from me the Laodicean Christians, and especially Nympha and the company of Christians which assembles in her house.

And when this letter has been read to your church see that it is read also to the Laodicean church and do you, in turn, read the letter which I have sent to the Laodicean church and which you will obtain from them. Give to Archippus this message from me: Attend diligently to the service which, in the name of Christ, I committed to you.

The apostle's autograph (4:18)

I add a personal greeting in my own handwriting. Remember my chains. God's grace be yours.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

I

THE OCCASION OF THE LETTER

The Epistle to Philemon is the only strictly private letter of Paul which has come down to us. It is a plea for a runaway slave, Onesimus, who had in some way defrauded his master, Philemon, gone off to Rome, and there been converted by the apostle. Philemon and his wife Apphia were Colossian Christians and converts and friends of Paul. When the apostle sent his epistle to the Colossian church by the hand of Tychicus, he sent with this messenger the converted slave Onesimus (Col. 4:7-9), bearing this personal message to his former master. How Onesimus had met with Paul we do not know; but in some way he had done so, and "the slave of Philemon became the freedman of Christ" (Lightfoot), and the apostle's trusted and valued Christian friend. Paul calls him his "very heart."

II

THE PECULIARITIES OF THE LETTER

The friendship, kindness, and playfulness of the letter can best be felt by carefully reading the epistle itself. There

is a charm of freedom and affection in this friendly message which is not surpassed by anything in all Paul's writings. The play on the meaning of the name Onesimus ("profitable") in verses 11 and 20, the proposal of the penniless prisoner Paul to give a bond for whatever Onesimus owed his friend (*v.* 19), and the reminder given to Philemon of how much, as Paul's convert, he owed to the apostle, are among the touches of humor and pathos which lend an enduring charm to this delightful letter.

III

THE MESSAGE TO PHILEMON

1. *Salutation and Thanksgiving* (1-7)

Salutation (1-3)

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy, our brother in the faith, to Philemon, our dearly beloved and fellow-laborer in the gospel, and to Apphia, our sister, and to Archippus, our fellow-soldier in Christ, and to the church which assembles in your house: Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving for Philemon's virtues (4-7)

I thank God for your growth in faith and goodness every time I mention you in my prayers; for I hear of the love and faith which you show toward Christ and all your fellow-Christians. I pray that in the knowledge of spiritual good, your faith may evidence itself in communicating blessing to others, to the praise of Christ. For it was a

great solace to my heart when I learned how you, my brother, had by your deeds of love cheered your fellow-disciples.

2. *The Appeal for Onesimus* (8-22)

The apostle's plea that Philemon would receive back his former slave Onesimus who has now become a Christian (8-22)

Since I have heard these tidings of your Christian love, although I might enjoin upon you to do what accords with that love, yet I prefer to ask it as a favor—inasmuch as I am an old man and a prisoner—because of my devotion to the gospel. I have a favor to ask of you regarding my child in the faith to whom I became as a spiritual father by leading him to Christ here in my imprisonment. I mean Onesimus, who, in time past, has, indeed, belied the meaning of his name ("profitable") and proved very *unprofitable* to you, but who now, as a Christian, will fulfil the meaning of his name and prove himself *profitable* to us both. I have sent him back to you now with this letter, dear as he is to me, yes, dear as my very heart. I should have been glad to keep him that he might represent yourself in ministration to me in my imprisonment; but I did not feel at liberty to do this without your consent lest I seem to be forcing a service from you which you had not freely authorized. It has occurred to me that Providence may have permitted him to be separated from you for a time that he might come back to you in a new character and relation, no longer as a mere slave, but as a beloved fellow-Christian. Such is he to me, and how

much more so should he be to you, toward whom he sustains both a worldly and a spiritual relation. Now, in view of our friendship, I ask you to receive and treat him as you would me, and whatever he owes you—charge it to me. Here is my bond in my own handwriting: I, Paul, will pay it; I say nothing here of what you owe me, since it was I who led you to Christ. Receive Onesimus, then, and thereby prove yourself my Onesimus—"profitable" to me—and thus cheer my spirit by your Christian conduct. I feel sure that in this matter you will do even more than I ask you to do. Prepare, also, to receive a visit from me, for I hope that in answer to your prayers I shall be released and permitted to visit you.

3. *Farewell Greetings* (23-25)

Personal salutations (23-25)

Epaphras, my fellow-captive in Christ, greets you, and so do my fellow-laborers, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke. The grace of Christ be with you. Amen.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

I

THE CHURCHES OF ASIA

The third missionary journey of Paul (Acts 18 : 24 ff.), as it is commonly called, was not so much a "journey" as a period of labor in the evangelization of proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the metropolis. For about three years (Acts 20 : 31) Paul and his assistants made their head-quarters at Ephesus, and from there as a centre his helpers went out into neighboring regions making converts and founding churches. In this way we can naturally account for Paul's keen interest in such churches as those at Colossæ, Laodicea, and Hierapolis (Col. 4 : 13-16), which he had never personally visited. They had been instructed in the type of doctrine which he taught and they belonged to his field of labor. Hence it was natural that he should write them letters.[1]

This period of Paul's sojourn in Ephesus and vicinity was one of joyful and successful labor. He was accom-

[1] The reference in Col. 4 : 16 to an epistle which was to come to Colossæ from Laodicea in return for the Colossian epistle which was to be sent to Laodicea to be read by the church there, makes it quite certain that Paul wrote a letter to the Laodiceans which, unfortunately, has been lost.

panied and assisted by such trusted helpers as Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila, and Timothy. At Ephesus he had a host of devoted friends—witness the touching scene of his meeting with the elders of the Ephesian church at Miletus on his way to Jerusalem when they all "fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the word that he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more" (Acts 20 : 37, 38). Despite the great opposition and the many difficulties which he encountered, the word of God "grew mightily and prevailed" (Acts 19 : 20). As the apostle expressed it, he "fought with beasts at Ephesus" (1 Cor. 15 : 32), but they were not able to prevail against him. The magicians burned their books in his presence (Acts 19 : 19) and the mob of silversmiths, led by Demetrius (Acts 19 : 23 ff.), quickly vanished when told that the Roman power might call them to strict account for disturbing the peace of the city. One obtains the most clear and impressive picture of the apostle's life at Ephesus from his pathetic address to the elders, recorded in Acts 20 : 18-35.

II

WAS EPHESIANS A CIRCULAR LETTER?

The reader of the Revised Version will observe, opposite the first verse of this epistle, this marginal note:

"Some very ancient authorities omit *at Ephesus.*" The reference is to the fact that the two oldest manuscripts of the New Testament omit this indication that Ephesus was the destination of the letter. From this fact and from the general character of the epistle, many scholars have concluded that it was really a circular letter to the churches of proconsular Asia, to which the name of the chief city of the region was afterward attached. On this view it may be supposed that a space was left in the salutation into which could be inserted the name of the particular place where the letter was being read, that the letter finally fell into the keeping of the Ephesian church, and that the space was at length permanently filled by the phrase *at Ephesus.* However this may be, it is certain that the letter is less personal and specific than most of Paul's epistles, and seems perfectly adapted to the more general use which this theory of its origin attributes to it. In any case, it was designed for the Ephesian church, even if it was also intended to be read to other congregations.

III

THE THEME AND DATE OF THE EPISTLE

Like the Epistle to the Colossians, our epistle treats mainly of the person and work of Christ. It dwells with special emphasis upon Christ's headship over the church,

which is described as his mystical body, and upon the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles and of all men to God through the Mediator of unity and harmony and the Author of peace. Thus it deals with the loftiest themes and is marked by an impressive elevation of thought and language.

No indications as to the date are contained in the epistle itself, but from its general resemblance in style and tone and from its similarity of subject to Colossians it is commonly assigned to the same period of Paul's life, that is, to the time of his first Roman imprisonment. If this view is correct the time of writing would probably fall within the year 62 or 63.

IV

THE MESSAGE TO THE EPHESIANS

1. *Salutation and Praise to God for the Blessings of Salvation* (1 : 1–14)

Salutation (1 : 1, 2)

I, Paul, a divinely appointed messenger of Christ, send to you Ephesian Christians wishes of grace and peace.

The glorious aim of the redemption offered through Christ (1 : 3-8)

I praise God that in Christ he has bestowed upon us all spiritual and heavenly gifts, according to his eternal purpose of love to make us pure and sinless through the work of Christ. For our salvation is grounded in God's

gracious purpose of redemption, wherein he has accomplished his loving design and has saved us through his Son. For it is due to the abundant grace of God that we are saved by the death of Christ and delivered from our sins. In the gospel we see revealed the heavenly secret of the divine wisdom, which God will, at length, fulfil in the saving work of Christ; namely, to bring all beings and powers, whether in heaven or earth, into unity and harmony in him; and in him we receive our heritage of mercy, according to God's saving and effective purpose, that we Jews who had set our hope on Christ might realize the purpose of God's love. And you Gentiles too, when you heard the message of salvation through Christ, believed on him and received the Holy Spirit as a pledge that your deliverance from sin should be complete, in fulfilment of God's loving will.

Who fulfils all expectations (1 : 9-10)

And extends his grace to all mankind (1 : 11-14)

2. *The Saving, Reconciling Work of Christ* (1 : 15 to 3 : 21)

On this account, since I heard the story of your devotion to Christ and to his people, I unceasingly praise God for it, and beseech him to enrich your life with all spiritual wisdom and knowledge; to illumine your hearts that you may appreciate the hope to which he calls you, the glorious blessings in store for you, and his effective working for the salvation of believers — a power which

The Christian's supreme need a realization of God's love and power (1 : 15-19)

Revealed in the exaltation and headship of Christ (1 : 20-23)

he has shown in the resurrection and glorification of Christ, whereby he has placed him in the supreme seat of authority in heaven and has subordinated to him all existing powers, and made him Sovereign over his church, his mystical body, which is filled and penetrated by his life.

Revealed also in our deliverance from hostility to God into fellowship and active service (2 : 1-10)

God, moreover, raised up you Gentiles, to a holy life from the moral death of sin—a state of sin in which you were formerly dominated by the principles of this evil age, in obedience to Satan, the prince of the powers which inhabit the upper air, the evil spirit which is now ruling in those who disobey God. To these disobedient ones we Jews also belonged when, in our former life, we gave ourselves up to evil passions and imaginations, and, thus giving the rein to nature, became objects of God's displeasure as really as the rest of mankind. But, despite our wickedness, God in his great love raised us from the moral death into which we had sunk, into a blessed life of fellowship with Christ (to his grace be all the praise!), and made us partakers in his heavenly dominion and glory. For God's grace is the ground of our salvation, as faith is the condition of its appropriation; we do not achieve it by our good works; God freely bestows it, and we must ascribe it to his goodness alone. Our Christian life is his work; we are his new creation and in his gracious purpose he has given us our place and work in his kingdom.

Do not forget your former condition when you were

carnal heathen; when Jews, the so-called "circumcision," used to speak of you with contempt as "the uncircumcision;" when you had no knowledge of Christ, of God's chosen people, or of his gracious revelation to them—were hopeless and godless. How great the change! Now through the death of Christ you have been made part of the true spiritual Israel. For by his saving death for all men he has removed the old division between Jew and Gentile; he has set aside the law which hedged the Jews off from the rest of men; he has united and harmonized in himself all mankind, so that humanity is no longer two but one. In his death for our entire race he has united Jew and Gentile; his salvation for all brings them together as sons of a common Father with unrestricted access to his presence. You must no longer be regarded as outsiders; you are a part of the family of God; yours is the full heritage of revelation through apostles and prophets; yours the saving benefits of Christ. You are a part of his spiritual temple. You must be fitted and shaped to your own place, so that the whole structure, harmonious and beautiful, may become a perfect dwelling-place for the Spirit of God.

The atoning death of Christ has broken down the barrier between Gentile and Jew (2 : 11-15)

All are now sons, fellow-citizens, temple stones (2 : 16-22)

It is to promote your edification in the spiritual life that I am enduring the hardships of imprisonment—for of course you know that I was entrusted with the mission of proclaiming the grace of God to you Gentiles. You know that to me was disclosed the secret of God's universal

To preach this new and wonderful truth Paul's glorious privilege (3: 1-9)

goodness, on which I have already commented in few words, by the reading of which you can perceive my acquaintance with God's saving purpose in Christ. In ancient times the knowledge that God's merciful designs embraced the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, was hidden from the thoughts of men; but it has now been revealed by the Spirit to the apostles and prophets, whom God has made the chosen recipients of this knowledge, that God purposes to save the Gentiles through Christ. And this is the message which God has commissioned and empowered me to proclaim. Yes, to me, once the wicked persecutor of the Christians, has God given the great privilege of assuring the heathen that they may be saved through Christ, and of helping them to believe that the sovereign God has disclosed in Christ his loving design towards them. Thus by the union of all mankind in the church shall it become apparent to all supernal Powers how glorious is God's redemptive purpose in Christ, through faith in whom we come to God in trustful confidence. Such being my mission on your behalf, do not be disheartened in your zeal because I must suffer persecution; rather should you feel honored by my endurance of suffering for your sake.

Its fruitage impressive even to the angels (3: 10-13)

That you may be encouraged I humbly pray the Father, from whom every order of his children receives its name,[1]

[1] There is a paronomasia here which it is impossible exactly to reproduce in English. God is the *πατήρ* after whom every *πατριά* is named; that is,

that in his abundant grace he would enrich your inner life; that through faith you may have living fellowship with Christ, so that, being firmly established in love, you may be fully able to grasp, with all your fellow-believers, the boundless greatness of Christ's love for men, in order that all the gifts of divine grace may be yours.

A prayer for their growth and progress (3:14-19)

Now unto him who is able to bless us far beyond all our desires and conceptions, according to that power whereby he works within us — unto him, in Christ, be honor rendered in his church, forever and ever. Amen.

A doxology (3:20-21)

3. *The Unity of Believers* (4:1-16)

Therefore I, the Lord's prisoner, exhort you to fulfil in your life the true meaning of your Christian profession. Be humble, meek, gentle, patient, and loving. Strive to maintain the unity which the Spirit fosters, being bound together by the tie of peace. The church, Christ's mystical body, is one, and is animated by one Spirit; the hope of salvation, to which you are summoned by the gospel, is the same for all believers. We have a common Lord; faith and baptism mean the same for us all; we have one God and Father, whose Spirit pervades and rules all Christian hearts. But, along with these grounds of unity,

Unity the goal of Christian society (4:1-3)

This unity of spirit consistent with variety of gifts (4:4-11)

the very name πατριά points to God as its πατήρ; every order of God's creatures by its very name (πατριά) recognizes him as the Father. The practical import of the whole phrase is: Father of angels and men.

there is also variety in the church. Christ has distributed to us various gifts of grace. As the Scripture says, When he ascended to heaven in triumph, he bestowed gifts upon men. [Now this ascent implies a previous descent to the underworld. It implies also the identity of the One who first went down to the world of the dead and then went up to the highest heavens there to reign in glory and power.] His various gifts are illustrated by the various offices and functions in the church, such as those of the apostle, the prophet, the evangelist, the pastor and teacher.

The result, the upbuilding and maturing of the church (4 : 12-16)

All these gifts are designed to equip his people for their work of service and to enable them to build up his church, until we all attain the ideal of unity and harmony in faith and knowledge—the full maturity of Christian manhood, measured by the standard of Christ's own perfection. The purpose of his gracious gifts is that we should not continue immature and unstable in our Christian life, so as to be susceptible to every deception and error; but that, living in truth and love, we should become like him from whom we draw our spiritual life, even Christ. He is the bond which binds us all together. He is the Head of a body of which we are all parts. By him each part, filling its own place and performing its own function, is made to contribute to the growth and perfection of the whole in love.

4. *Demands of Christian Life and Duty* (4 : 17 to 6 : 20)

Such being the nature and requirements of the Christian life, you should not live, as other Gentiles do, in wicked folly and moral blindness, estranged from God by ignorance and perversity, in moral insensibility giving themselves over to the indulgence of the basest passions. Such a life is contrary to Christ. When the gospel was preached to you you were taught that discipleship to Christ requires the giving up of the old sinful life, with its corruptions, and the living of a new, inward, spiritual, and holy life.

Christianity requires a holy life (4 : 17-24)

Renounce, then, the sins which marked that former evil life. Cease lying and speak the truth, for this is a duty based on our common humanity. Let not your anger betray you into sin; let no day's close find you still harboring resentment; do not allow Satan to obtain power over you. Those who have been guilty of stealing must cease from it and support themselves by honest labor, that they may also aid their needy brethren. Avoid all corrupt speech but rather use such as builds up the church and blesses your hearers, lest you offend the Holy Spirit, given you as a pledge of your redemption. Put away from you every resentful and malicious passion, and imitate the kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness with which God, through Christ, has regarded and treated you.

And a deliberate turning away from former sins (4 : 25-32)

This love of God is the pattern of life for you, his

Love its law (5 : 1, 2)

beloved children. Let love therefore rule your life, even as it ruled that of Christ, who gave himself up to death for us, an offering acceptable in the sight of God. As

Impurity, folly, or avarice unbefitting the Christian (5 : 3-14)

Christians you must wholly avoid all impurity, lust, and avarice, all buffoonery and ribald jesting, for not such speech, but rather thanksgiving becomes you. For you know well that those who are guilty of such sins (covetousness is a kind of idol worship) have no part in the kingdom of heaven. Let no man persuade you that they are innocent; for these are the deeds which provoke God's holy indignation against those who are guilty of them. Refuse all partnership with such persons; for your former evil life, with which such vices are in keeping, is now passed, and you are the possessors of the light which reveals purity and truth; let your conduct be pure, for the Christian life yields moral rectitude and uprightness as its fruit. Make sure of what is acceptable to Christ and wholly avoid the evil life which brings no fruitage of blessing, but rather expose its real character. For of the secret deeds of the heathen it were disgraceful even to speak. The light of truth, shining upon them, makes their foulness manifest. That this judgment of the light upon evil may take place, we Christians must rouse ourselves from moral stupor and become the bearers of Christ's light to men.

Wise Christian conduct (5 : 15-20)

Take careful heed, then, to your conduct; be discerning and make the most of your opportunities, for the times are evil. Do not give way to folly, but learn to know the

will of Christ. Do not seek the excitement of intoxication, but the joy which comes from the Spirit's indwelling, so that you may edify one another with devout songs of praise to Christ, accompanied by the melody of the heart. Render perpetual thanks to God for all the blessings which he has bestowed upon you through Christ.

The relationship between husband and wife like that of Christ and the church (5 : 21-33)

Observe among yourselves the proper relations of subjection and dependence, remembering that Christ is your judge. This law of dependence requires the obedience of the wife to her husband, which is involved in obedience to Christ. For the husband possesses authority over the wife, even as Christ does over the church, his mystical body, which he saves. But as the church obeys Christ, so let wives in all things obey their husbands. Husbands, on their part, must love their wives with a love such as Christ showed in his willingness to die for the church, in order that, having purified it in the baptismal waters, he might hallow it by the indwelling of God's word, that, at his coming, he might set before himself his church as a pure and spotless bride. With such love should husbands love their wives—even as they cherish their own bodies. Since husband and wife are morally one, to love the wife is to love one's self. Men do not disregard, but care for and preserve their bodies, as Christ also cherishes his body, the church of which we are members. Therefore, just as in marriage (according to the Old Testament) a man is to leave his parents and become one with his wife

in wedlock, so shall Christ at his coming become united with his spiritual bride, the church. A deep meaning underlies this language, and I apply it to the mystical union of Christ with the church. Now, to pursue the subject no further, let each one of you (according to the analogy of Christ's love for his church) love his wife as himself, and let the wife in turn reverence her husband.

Relations of parent and child (6 : 1-4)

The principle of dependence and submission in question requires children to render obedience to their parents as a Christian duty. They are to honor their parents according to the commandment, which is the first one which has a promise attached to it, namely, that of long life in the land of promise for those who obey. And fathers, on their part, should not by harshness provoke angry passions in their children, but should discipline and train them in the spirit of Christ.

Reciprocal duties of masters and servants founded on a higher allegiance (6 : 5-9)

Servants are to obey their natural superiors with a zeal which is careful to leave no duty undone, without hypocrisy or duplicity, as rendering service to Christ. Their service should not be rendered with a mere semblance of fidelity or with a view to human approbation, but in the conviction that, as Christ's servants, their work is divinely appointed and is to be faithfully performed as a duty which they owe to God. They should remember that every man, whatever his social standing, shall receive from Christ the just reward of his service. And, in turn, the masters must treat their bondmen with kindness, re-

fraining from all undue severity and remembering that they, as well as their slaves, are under the authority of the exalted Christ and that he will impartially judge men without reference to their social condition.

The Christian life a spiritual struggle (6 : 10-12)

Finally, equip yourselves with the conquering power which the Lord bestows. As Christian warriors, array yourselves in the panoply of God in order that you may stand your ground against the cunning assaults of the devil. For our Christian conflict is not against feeble human strength, but against the superhuman powers which rule this dark and evil age — against the wicked spirit-hosts which inhabit the upper air. Wherefore put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand them in the day of battle, and, having achieved the victory over all foes, may still stand upright ready for conflict. Stand forth, therefore, girded with the belt of truth, wearing the breastplate of moral uprightness, and shod as ready messengers of the glad tidings of peace. In addition to these equipments, take up the shield of faith by means of which you will be able to extinguish all the burning arrows of Satan. Put on as a helmet the certainty of salvation and grasp the sword which the Spirit provides, the gospel of divine truth. Continue to pray unceasingly and earnestly for all our fellow-Christians, and for me, that God may guide and teach me in my efforts to disclose to men the heavenly secret contained in the gospel, for the proclamation of which I am in

The Christian warrior's armour (6 : 13-18)

Paul's own need of support in prayer (6 : 19, 20)

my imprisonment fulfilling the office of Christ's representative. Continue, then, to pray that I may deliver my message with boldness, as it is my duty to do.

5. *Farewell and Benediction* (6 : 21-24)

A personal message (6 : 21, 22)

Now that you, as well as others, may know my condition, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant of Christ, will fully inform you. I have sent him for this very purpose, that you might know how we do and that he might encourage you in the Christian life.

Parting blessing (6 : 23, 24)

Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with never-failing love.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

I

PAUL'S RELATIONS WITH PHILIPPI

Philippi, an important town of Macedonia, was the first European city in which the gospel was preached. It was to Philippi that Paul went in answer to the request of the man of Macedonia, whom he had heard in a vision saying: "Come over into Macedonia, and help us" (Acts 16 : 9). There he preached at the Jews' praying-place by a river's side. The work prospered until the cure of a female slave who practised magic arts and thereby brought large profits to her owners, caused an uproar, and finally occasioned the expulsion of Paul and Silas from the city.

The apostle maintained frequent communication with the Philippian Christians and cherished a peculiar affection for them. From this church alone he seems to have been willing to receive gifts for his personal support (Phil. 4 : 15), and twice, while he was at Thessalonica, they sent assistance to him (Phil. 4 : 16). This kindness they repeated when he reached Corinth (2 Cor. 11 : 8, 9).

II

THE OCCASION AND OBJECT OF THE EPISTLE

Paul's imprisonment at Rome excited the deepest solicitude of the Philippian Christians on his behalf and they accordingly sent Epaphroditus, one of the most beloved and trusted of their number, to comfort him and to supply his needs (Phil. 4 : 18). Our epistle is a letter of thanks for this kindness. But, of course, the apostle goes beyond the immediate purpose of the letter, sends them tidings about himself, his condition and hopes of release, and adds many warnings and advices for their benefit.

It accords with the occasion of the epistle that it should be practical and personal, rather than doctrinal or controversial. Its doctrinal elements are incidental to its friendly advices and practical teaching. Philippians is the most affectionate of all Paul's epistles; it has been called "Paul's love-letter." In writing to the Philippians he had no occasion to refute heresies, as he did in writing to the Colossians and Galatians; nor did he need to rebuke immoralities, as in writing to the Corinthians. Such dangers as threatened the church were still outside of it and it was enough to warn his readers against them. Still, the Philippians were by no means faultless. There seem to have been jealousies, rivalries, and personal alienations which had not a little impaired the unity of the church. To

these he doubtless alludes when he exhorts the readers to be "of one accord, of one mind" (1 : 27 ; compare 4 : 2), to do nothing from a spirit of faction or selfish ambition, but carefully to regard the rights and interests of others (2 : 2-4).

The reference to Cæsar's household (4 : 22) shows that the epistle was written from Rome. Some scholars, on the ground of kinship of ideas between it and the great doctrinal letters, hold that it is the earliest of the epistles of the first imprisonment, but it is generally regarded as the latest and as having been written in the year 63. This view is favored by some special circumstances mentioned in the epistle, as, for example, the extraordinary progress which the gospel had at length made among the Roman soldiers (Phil. 1 : 13) and its acceptance even in the imperial palace (4 : 22).

III

THE MESSAGE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

1. *Salutation and Thanksgiving* (1 : 1-11)

Paul and Timothy, bondmen of Jesus Christ, to all the Christians at Philippi, together with the bishops and deacons. Grace and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Salutation (1 : 1, 2)

I am thankful to God whenever I think of you. I

Paul's glad recognition of their hearty fellowship and desire for their Christian perfection (1 : 3-11)

always gladly remember you all in my prayers, for you have co-operated with me in extending the gospel from the time when you first heard of it until now. I am confident that God, who has begun the work of your salvation, will carry it forward to its perfection at the Lord's coming. I justify this confidence by my affection for you and by your sympathy and co-operation with me in my imprisonment and in the promotion of the gospel. Thus have you all shown yourselves to be sharers in the grace which Christ has bestowed upon me. I call God to witness that I yearn after you all with a Christlike affection. I pray that your love may grow more and more in intelligence and discrimination, that you may discern and approve the good, that you may be found pure and blameless at Christ's coming, and that you may be full of all good works, to the praise of God.

2. *A Chapter in the Apostle's Experience* (1 : 12-30)

The preaching of the gospel promoted by his Roman imprisonment (1 : 12-14)

Now my trial and imprisonment, brethren, so far from hindering my work of preaching, have rather promoted it. That I was imprisoned for my devotion to Christ has become known not only to the soldiers of the imperial guard, but to the whole people of Rome, and my experience and success have inspired most of my fellow-disciples with new zeal and boldness in the proclamation of the gospel. But not all who preach Christ do so from worthy motives. Some are actuated by envy of me; others by

kindness toward me. The latter work in sympathy with me as a divinely appointed defender of the gospel; the former are moved by a spirit of contention and partisanship, designing only to annoy and wound me. What shall be said of the work of those who do this? I will only say of it that, in any case, whether with pure or with impure motives, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice; yes, and I will continue to rejoice. For I know that this trial which they are causing me will result in my spiritual profit, in answer to your prayers and through the grace of the Spirit. And thus shall I realize my eager longing and confidence that my efforts will not be defeated, but that now, as always, I shall act and speak with all courage, so as to honor Christ with my life, whether I give it up in his service or live to labor on in his cause. Between life and death I have little care to choose. Life means labor for Christ; death means blessed fellowship with him. When I think of what I might do for Christ by continuing to live—but I will express no preference. Each alternative powerfully appeals to me. My personal wish would be to die and dwell with Christ; for me that would be better than living. But when I think of you and of what I can do for you, I should wish to live and labor on. And when I view the question thus, I am persuaded that it will be so. I shall continue with you all, that I may promote your Christian life and your joy in believing, so that you may greatly rejoice in Christ when you have

Even through those moved by jealousy (1 : 15-18)

The service of Christ his one ambition (1 : 19-21)

His serene outlook for the future (1 : 22-26)

His disciples must be faithful and undismayed by persecution (1 : 27-30)

me present with you once more. But whether I come or not, do you act worthily of your citizenship in the heavenly kingdom, that, whether present or absent, I may learn that in unity of spirit you are standing firm and are vigorously defending the faith in Christ which the gospel requires. I hope to hear that in the presence of the assaults of your enemies you display a courage which will be at once an omen of their utter defeat and a divine pledge of your victory, for God has graciously bestowed upon you the privilege, not only of believing on Christ, but also of suffering for his sake. In your present trials you are engaged in the same struggle in which you saw me contending when I was at Philippi, and which you now hear of my experiencing here in my Roman prison.

3. *Exhortation to Unity and Self-denial* (2 : 1-18)

The Christian should become humble and unselfish (2 : 1-4)

I appeal to you in the name of your Christian experience, your mutual love, your spiritual fellowship, and your affections and sympathies, to give me the joy of knowing that you continue in unity and harmony. Avoid all partisanship and vain ambition and cultivate humility and unselfishness. Let no one of you regard merely his own interests, but let him also consult the interests and wants of others. Cherish the disposition which dwelt in Christ, who, though he existed in a divine mode of being, did not regard that state of existence as something to be eagerly grasped and retained, but relinquished it and

assumed the likeness of men by taking on a servant-form. Nor was this all. Having assumed the fashion of our humanity, he stooped to suffer, in obedience to God, the shameful death of the cross. But the path of humiliation proved to be the way of true exaltation, for in consequence of his self-renunciation, God exalted him to a place of supremacy and dominion and bestowed upon him the highest title and dignity, and ordained that all beings should pay homage to his majesty and acknowledge his lordship to the praise of God the Father.

Imitating his Lord who through humiliation and obedience was exalted (2 : 5-11)

Inspired by this example of Christ, continue to show the same spirit of obedience which you have always shown. Do not depend upon my presence to incite you to your duty, but now while I am absent from you, diligently seek to carry to completion the work of your salvation with all care and anxiety lest you fail. And remember that you do not strive at this task unaided. God is meanwhile working within you, inspiring your determination and directing your progress, in order that his gracious will may be accomplished in your completed salvation. Avoid complaints and dissensions, that you may provoke no censure and may show yourselves to be God's true children in the midst of a corrupt people, among whom you are to appear as luminaries in a dark world, holding out to others the gospel of life. Let me be able, when Christ shall appear, to point to your faithfulness as proof that my efforts on your behalf have not been fruit-

The proper fruitage of such a spirit of obedience (2 : 12-18)

less. To secure this result I would willingly pour out my life as a libation, in addition to the sacrifice of your faith which you are offering to God ; I can rejoice in promoting your salvation even at such a cost, and I ask you also to rejoice and to congratulate me.

4. *The Missions of Timothy and Epaphroditus* (2 : 19-30)

The probable visit from Timothy the faithful (2 : 19-24)

But I am hoping for such a favorable turn in my case that I can send Timothy to you soon and obtain news of your condition. For, besides him, I have no other who would so genuinely interest himself in your welfare. For all the rest are occupied with their own interests, not with those of Christ. But Timothy you have tested, and you know with what filial fidelity he served me in promoting the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I learn what turn my affairs will take. And I also hope that Providence will soon open the way for me to visit you. Meanwhile, I have deemed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my comrade and the bearer of your bounty to me. For he yearned to see you, and was distressed because he knew that you had received the report of his sickness. And, indeed, he was very sick, so that we despaired of his life. But God was merciful to him and to me, and restored him and thus spared me the additional sorrow which his death would have caused. I have therefore, the more willingly sent him to you, that

The reception deserved by Epaphroditus, their brave delegate (2 : 25-30)

you may be cheered by seeing him, and that the knowledge of your joy may lighten the burden of my present suffering. Welcome him with all gladness as a Christian brother. Such as he are deserving of all respect, for in his devotion to the work of Christ he risked his life and was brought near to death's door that he might render that service of love which, had it been possible, you would gladly have rendered to me in person.

5. *Warnings against Judaism and Libertinism* (3 : 1 to 4 : 1)

A warning against those who exalt circumcision (3 : 1-3)

Now, my brethren, whatever your trials, continue to rejoice in the Lord. I do not hesitate to mention again an old subject, for you need to be warned with regard to it again and again. Be on your guard against those shameless, mischief-making Judaizers, whose boasted circumcision I should call mere mutilation. For the true "circumcision" is a spiritual worship and service, such as we Christians practice who set no value upon mere outward rites. Were any saving value to be attached to these, I might lay claim to the boasted advantage. I was born and reared a strict Jew; I grew up a rigid legalist and carried out my Pharisaic zeal consistently by persecuting the Christians; in conformity to the law, I fell short in no particular. But now I have renounced all these proud claims and supposed advantages for the sake of Christ. All my legal righteousness and meritorious works

Such usages long since tested by Paul and found worthless (3 : 4-8)

I now esteem as utterly worthless compared to the saving knowledge of Christ. To me now they seem the merest refuse if only I can make Christ my own, and find my true life in fellowship with him. I renounce all claim to acceptance with God on the ground of my obedience to the law, and seek acceptance and pardon solely through trust in Christ for salvation. I desire only fellowship with Christ—to rise with him to newness of life, to die with him to sin, in order that, at length, I may attain full perfection of life in his kingdom. But this high attainment is yet far beyond me. Still, I am eagerly pressing forward in the race in order to reach the goal to which Christ is ever summoning me. No; I have not reached it; but one thing I am doing: dissatisfied with all past attainments and bending every energy, as the athlete does in a race, I am striving to reach the high destiny to which God, through Christ, has called me. Let all of us, then, who know the nature and demands of the Christian life, give ourselves to this effort, and if, in any respect, any of us fall short in our ideal or endeavor, God will help us to correct our fault; but there is one thing we must remember: if we are to make progress, we must live up to our best present knowledge of the ideals and requirements of the Christian life.

Fellowship with Christ only to be won by persistent effort (3 : 9-14)

In accord with our highest ideals (3 : 15, 16)

Vie with each other, brethren, in imitating me, and observe those whose conduct resembles mine. For there are many, of whom I have often spoken to you and of whom I now tell you with tears, whose conduct shows them to be

Worldly and sensual men have no part in Christ (3 : 17-19)

foes of our doctrine of salvation by Christ's death. They are destined to destruction ; they are slaves of appetite ; they rejoice in their own disgrace ; their affections are set on this world. But we belong to a commonwealth which has its seat in heaven, whence we look for the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ to save us, who, by his all-conquering power, shall transform the corrupt and perishable bodies in which we now dwell into the likeness of his own glorified body. Inspired by this glorious hope, my brethren dearly beloved, stand firm in your Christian life and profession.

For the Christian as a citizen of the Kingdom of heaven (3 : 20–4 : 1)

6. *Concluding Exhortations and Greetings* (4 : 2-23)

I beg Euodia and Syntyche to cease their variance and become reconciled. Yes, I entreat you, my faithful companion, to help them to compose their differences, for these women were among my devoted helpers, along with Clement and the other faithful laborers, whose names are written in the register of God's faithful people.

An exhortation to reconciliation (4 : 2, 3)

Once and again I exhort you to joyfulness in your Christian life. Be gentle toward all ; the Lord's coming draws near. Be not distracted by anxious care, but in prayer and praise commit your wants and desires to God. And the peace which God bestows, which, more than all human reasoning or forethought, brings rest to the soul, will guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus.

To joy, forbearance, trustfulness, prayer (4 : 4-7)

To the earnest practice of all virtues (4 : 8, 9)

Finally, brethren, whatever is worthy of reverence, true, just, pure, lovely, and fair—in short, whatever moral excellence there is, and whatever praise it deserves, carefully reflect upon it. Observe my instruction and example, and God shall bless you with his peace.

Paul's gratitude for their affection and generosity (4 : 10-20)

It is to me a sacred joy to think that after so long an absence you have again proved your generous kindness toward me—a feeling which you have constantly cherished, but lacked the opportunity to show. It was not merely my need which made your gift so welcome, for I have learned to be contented in my lot, whatever it is. I know how to be humbled by want and I know how to bear abundance. I have become accustomed to the most various outward conditions. My sufficiency, however, is not from myself, but from him who gives me strength to endure all things. But, though I am not concerned for my outward condition, I count it a beautiful thing in you to show me your sympathy and aid in my affliction. This also is not the first time, for you will remember well, my Philippian friends, that in my early missionary preaching, as I was leaving Macedonia, you were the only church which contributed to my support, for when I was at Thessalonica you more than once sent supplies to me. I prize your gift not so much for itself as for the spiritual blessing which its bestowment will bring to you. My wants are fully met by your recent contribution to my need, which Epaphroditus brought—a sweet odor of sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

God will abundantly recompense you out of his full store-house of blessing in Christ. To him, our God and Father, be glory forever.

Farewell greetings (4 : 21-23)

My salutations to all the members of your church. My companions here, and all the members of the Roman church, especially those of the Emperor's household, salute you. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

BOOKS OF REFERENCE

Among the books which will be found most helpful in a study of Paul's Epistles are the elaborate "Lives of Paul," by Conybeare and Howson, and by Dean Farrar (many editions). A brief but excellent "Life" is that by Professor James Iverach, 1890. (Randolph.) The still briefer but very graphic and interesting "Life of St. Paul," by Dr. James Stalker, (Revell or Am. Tract Society,) is especially to be commended. Ramsay's "St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen," 1896, and his "Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians," 1900, (Putnam,) are particularly valuable for their fresh and scholarly treatment of the history from the standpoint of the archæology of Asia Minor.

The Epistles of Paul are more directly discussed in Dr. Lyman Abbott's "Life and Letters of Paul," 1898, (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.,) and in Dean Sabatier's "The Apostle Paul," 1896. (James Pott & Co.) Students of the Epistles will find in each of these volumes a fresh and independent treatment of the apostle's life and work. Dr. Orello Cone's elaborate treatise, "Paul the Man, the Missionary, and the Teacher," 1898, (Macmillan,) is executed in the spirit of radical German criticism. "The Spiritual Development of St. Paul," by Dr.

George Matheson, 1890, (T. & T. Clark,) is a brilliant, but somewhat fanciful, account of Paul's growth and experience.

Among the more recent and available expositions of the Pauline letters are the volumes in "The Expositor's Bible," (Armstrong,) and in the series entitled, "The Cambridge Bible for Schools." (Cambridge University Press.) A much more elaborate and critical commentary is the "International," now appearing. (Scribner.)

Brief hand-books of "Introduction" to the Epistles have been prepared by Professors Dods, Findlay, and Lumby. Much more elaborate treatises are those of Weiss, Salmon, Gloag, and Godet. I would especially commend the volume by Dean Farrar entitled, "The Messages of the Books," 1885. (E. P. Dutton & Co.)

The Theology of Paul as a whole has been elaborately treated by Professor Otto Pfleiderer, from the stand-point of German criticism, in his "Paulinism," 1877, (Williams & Norgate,) and, from a more conservative point of view, by Professor A. B. Bruce in "St. Paul's Conception of Christianity," 1894, (Scribner,) and by Professor G. B. Stevens in "The Pauline Theology," 1897. (Scribner.) Specific topics have also been made the subjects of special investigations such as: "St. Paul's Use of the Terms Flesh and Spirit," 1883, by Professor W. P. Dickson, and: "St. Paul's Conception of Christ," 1897, by Rev. David Somerville. For a much fuller list of books I would refer the reader to the bibliography appended to my "Theology of the New Testament," 1899. (Scribner.)